

Youth Advisory Board - Broad Principles

(Pride in Place – Hartlepool Board, aligned with ABCD and fully representative)



1. Representative of the Whole Youth Ecosystem

- Ensure the YAB brings together young people from *all* major youth forums and networks in Hartlepool, including:
 - **Youth Transformation**
 - **Youth Partnership**
 - **Youth Network (providers)**
 - **Sports clubs**
 - **Uniformed services** (e.g., Scouts, Guides, Cadets)
 - **Youth MP and Youth Parliament structures**

- **Schools and pupil councils**
 - **Youth advisory councils**
 - **Community and faith groups**
 - **Any additional networks representing diverse young people**
 - Maintain a transparent, inclusive selection process that values lived experience as much as formal representation.
-

2. Asset-Based Focus (Starting with Strengths)

- Recognise the unique strengths, skills, interests and community knowledge that each group—and each young person—brings.
 - Map and use these collective assets to inform Pride in Place priorities.
 - Avoid deficit-based language; focus on what young people already have, know, and can contribute.
-

3. Community-Centred Identity and Belonging

- Ground the board's work in the identity, culture, and pride of Hartlepool's neighbourhoods.
 - Ensure that the voices of young people from different communities—including those often underrepresented—are heard and valued.
 - Foster a sense of ownership over local spaces and projects.
-

4. Collaboration Across Networks (Connecting People and Assets)

- Use the YAB as a hub that links youth networks with each other and with the Hartlepool Board.
 - Encourage collaboration between schools, youth organisations, sports groups, cultural groups, and grassroots community organisations.
 - Share learning, resources, and opportunities across networks to maximise collective impact.
-

5. Participation Through Co-Creation and Action

- Move beyond consultation to **co-design, co-delivery, and shared decision-making**.
- Empower young people to shape project ideas, test pilot initiatives, and lead community-based activities within Pride in Place.

- Promote hands-on involvement that builds agency.
-

6. Inclusivity, Accessibility and Diversity

- Ensure the YAB reflects the diversity of Hartlepool's youth in age, gender, ability, identity, cultural background, socio-economic status and lived experience.
 - Provide flexible meeting formats (in-person, digital, hybrid), accessible language, and practical support (transport, refreshments, wellbeing).
 - Foster a safe and respectful environment where all voices carry equal weight.
-

7. Transparency, Trust and Mutual Accountability

- Develop clear processes showing how youth insights shape Pride in Place decisions.
 - Commit to "You said, we did" reporting that closes the feedback loop.
 - Uphold safeguarding, confidentiality, and ethical participation standards.
-

8. Growth, Leadership and Pathways

- Support young people to build leadership skills through training, mentoring and opportunities to represent Hartlepool locally and regionally.
 - Recognise contributions formally (certificates, digital badges, references).
 - Create pathways into roles such as community ambassadors, future board members or civic leaders.
-

9. Continuity and Sustainability

- Embed the YAB as a long-term governance structure, not a one-off initiative.
 - Refresh membership regularly while maintaining continuity of knowledge.
 - Use young people's feedback to keep the structure relevant and responsive.
-

10. Flexibility, Innovation and Youth-Led Solutions

- Encourage creative thinking and new approaches to tackling local issues.
- Allow room for experimentation, rapid prototyping, and youth-led micro-projects.
- Prioritise ideas that reflect lived experience and community assets.

Youth Advisory Board – Terms of Reference

Pride in Place – Hartlepool Board

1. Purpose

The Youth Advisory Board (YAB) ensures that the voices, strengths and lived experiences of young people across Hartlepool actively shape the Pride in Place programme. The YAB provides insight, co-design input, and youth-led recommendations to the Hartlepool Board.

2. Principles (ABCD-Aligned)

- **Asset-Based:** Start with young people’s strengths, skills and community knowledge.
 - **Inclusive & Representative:** Reflect young people from all major youth networks and communities across Hartlepool.
 - **Collaborative:** Connect youth organisations, schools, providers, and local partners to co-create solutions.
 - **Community-Centred:** Ground work in Hartlepool’s identity, neighbourhood pride and local assets.
 - **Youth-Led Participation:** Prioritise co-design and hands-on involvement in Pride in Place activity.
-

3. Membership

The YAB will include representatives from across the youth ecosystem, such as:

- Youth Transformation
- Youth Partnership
- Youth Network (providers)
- Sports clubs
- Uniformed services
- Youth MP / Youth Parliament
- Schools and pupil councils
- Youth advisory councils
- Community and faith groups
- Other youth forums and underrepresented groups

Membership will balance formal representation and lived-experience voices. Terms are typically 12 months.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Youth Advisory Board Members

- Provide insight from their networks and communities.
- Participate in co-design of Pride in Place projects.
- Share information between the YAB and their respective groups.
- Champion inclusivity and positive representation of young people.

Hartlepool Board / Officers

- Provide clear briefs, opportunities, and requests for input.
 - Share feedback on how youth input influences decisions.
 - Ensure a safe, supportive and accessible environment.
-

5. Meetings

- Held **bi-monthly** (six per year), with additional sessions as needed.
 - Hybrid or in-person formats to ensure accessibility.
 - Quorum: at least 50% of active membership.
-

6. Decision-Making

The YAB provides **advisory recommendations** to the Hartlepool Board.

Decisions within the YAB are made by consensus where possible, or simple majority if required.

7. Safeguarding and Conduct

- All activity will follow applicable safeguarding policies.
 - Members must show respect, confidentiality, and inclusive behaviour at all times.
 - Support will be available for wellbeing and accessibility needs.
-

8. Accountability and Reporting

- The YAB will receive regular updates on how its recommendations have been used.
- An annual summary of impact will be shared with the Hartlepool Board and youth networks.
- Members commit to feeding back outcomes to their representative groups.

9. Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually with youth input to ensure they remain relevant and reflective of Hartlepool's evolving youth landscape.

Delegate vs. Appointed Representative with Their Own Agency

Pros & Cons

1. Delegate (Chosen by a group to speak on their behalf)

Pros

- **Clear mandate:** The delegate carries specific views and priorities from their group, ensuring strong representation.
- **Accountability:** They are directly answerable to the group that selected them.
- **Broad legitimacy:** Other young people may be more willing to trust them since they were chosen democratically.
- **Consistent communication:** Regular feedback loops between the YAB and the sending organisation are built-in.
- **Less risk of bias:** The delegate speaks on behalf of a collective, rather than personal opinions.

Cons

- **Narrower perspective:** They may feel obligated to stick strictly to their group's views, limiting flexibility or creativity.
 - **Risk of tokenism:** If the group elects someone without real support or support structures, the delegate may struggle to be effective.
 - **Variable quality:** Different groups may elect delegates with uneven skills or capacity.
 - **Pressure:** Young people may feel burdened to 'get it right' for others rather than speak authentically.
 - **Slower decision-making:** Delegates may need to consult their group frequently before contributing.
-

**2. Appointed Representative With Their Own Agency

(Selected to contribute independently rather than formally represent a group)**

Pros

- **Greater flexibility:** They can draw on their full lived experience, creativity, strengths, and personal judgement.
- **Innovation-friendly:** Less constrained by organisational priorities, they may propose fresh or unconventional ideas.
- **Easier recruitment:** Individuals can be chosen based on strengths, diversity, and enthusiasm.

- **Increased empowerment:** Builds confidence by valuing the young person's voice as an individual, not just as a channel.
- **More inclusive:** Allows participation from young people who may not be part of formal networks or groups.

Cons

- **Less direct accountability:** They may not formally report back to a larger group of young people.
 - **Representation gaps:** Without a mandate, they might unintentionally reflect personal views more than wider youth perspectives.
 - **Perceived legitimacy:** Other youth networks may question whose interests the representative speaks for.
 - **Risk of inconsistency:** Without a structured feedback mechanism, contributions may rely on individual commitment.
 - **Potential bias:** Personal experiences—while valuable—may overshadow collective youth needs.
-

Summary Insight

- A **delegate model** ensures **strong representation, accountability, and direct connection** to youth networks, but may limit flexibility and creativity.
- An **appointed representative model** prioritises **individual agency, innovation, and inclusivity**, but can introduce challenges in legitimacy and structured representation.

Hybrid Membership Model: Delegated Representatives with Individual Agency

Overview

This hybrid model blends **formal representation** (to ensure legitimacy and connection to youth networks) with **personal agency** (to empower young people as individuals with lived experience, creativity and leadership potential).

Members are both **linked to a group** and encouraged to bring their own insight, ideas, and judgement.

Hybrid Model Structure

1. Nominated Delegates (Representing Key Networks)

Each major youth network or forum nominates a young person to participate in the YAB.

Examples include:

- Youth Partnership
- Youth MP / Youth Parliament
- Youth Transformation
- Uniformed services
- Sports clubs
- Schools / pupil voice councils
- Youth advisory councils
- Youth Network (providers)
- Community and faith-based youth groups

What makes this “hybrid”:

- Delegates **carry the perspectives** of their group *but are not bound* to speak exclusively on its views.
 - They are empowered to contribute **in their own voice** when issues go beyond their group’s scope.
 - They have equal status to independent members.
-

2. Appointed Independent Members (Individual Agency Pathway)

A smaller number of seats are reserved for young people who apply individually—especially those:

- not affiliated with a formal group,
- from underrepresented backgrounds, or

- with unique lived experience valuable to Pride in Place.

These members act with full individual agency, ensuring the board isn't limited to established networks.

How the Hybrid Model Works

A. Shared Principles for All Members

- Speak from both **community insight** and **personal experience**.
 - Use the ABCD approach—focus on strengths, assets and local knowledge.
 - Participate in co-design, solution-building and decision-making.
 - Respect and value diverse viewpoints.
-

B. Responsibilities of Nominated Delegates

- Consult with their nominating body to gather input where relevant.
 - Feed back YAB outcomes to their group in accessible ways.
 - Bring their **own ideas and lived experience** to the table.
 - Make informed decisions without requiring constant group approval.
-

C. Responsibilities of Independent Members

- Offer insight from personal experience or community involvement.
 - Engage young people outside formal networks for wider perspectives.
 - Ensure the board hears voices not already represented.
-

Benefits of the Hybrid Approach

Combines the best of both models:

- **Legitimacy:** Youth networks know they're represented.
- **Balance:** Collective views and personal agency coexist.
- **Inclusion:** Young people not in formal groups can still participate.
- **Flexibility:** Members can respond quickly without waiting for group consultations.
- **Equity:** Power isn't concentrated among only the most organised networks.
- **Creativity:** Independent voices bring innovation and challenge group assumptions.

Avoids key drawbacks:

- Prevents narrow representation (delegate-only downside).
 - Avoids questions of legitimacy (appointed-only downside).
 - Reduces pressure on delegates to “speak for everyone.”
 - Ensures continuity even if network structures change.
-

Optional Add-On: “Dual Accountability”

To maintain balance:

- All members commit to sharing decisions with peers or networks.
- The YAB runs quick “pulse checks” or youth surveys to gather broader views.
- A yearly review ensures representation stays reflective and fair.