

Youth Talk Youth Panel

Terms of reference

1 Purpose of Youth Panel

At Youth Talk, we believe young people should have a say in how things are done - and that's exactly why our Youth Panel exists. It's a space for young people to share views, ideas and experiences to help shape our services, campaigns, events, social media, and more.

Whether it's giving feedback, sparking new ideas, or getting stuck into a project, our panel helps make sure young people's voices are right at the heart of everything we do.

2 Our Ethos

The Youth Panel is underpinned by the following principles:

- All voices are listened to and respected equally
- The environment is inclusive, welcoming, and supportive
- Differences in experience and opinion are valued
- The group works collaboratively to make a real difference to young people's mental health

3 Membership

The panel is made up of approximately **15 young people**, aged **13 to 25**, who live, work, or study in St Albans, Harpenden and the surrounding areas.

Membership is offered for an initial **12-month term**, with the option to renew for a further 12 months where appropriate. Recruitment will be ongoing or through open calls, depending on panel needs and capacity.

Youth Talk aims to ensure the panel reflects a diverse mix of experiences, backgrounds, and identities - and encourages applications from underrepresented groups.

4 Responsibilities

Panel members help Youth Talk by:

- **Making sure young people's voices are heard** across the charity's work
- **Sharing honest feedback** and helping review or improve any changes being suggested - including speaking up if something doesn't feel right
- **Getting involved in fundraising activities**, from sharing ideas to helping out at events
- **Contributing to social media and communications**, where appropriate - helping shape how the charity connects with other young people
- **Representing and speaking at Youth Talk at events** or meetings - this is always optional, and members can put themselves forward if interested

5 Commitment

Members are asked to:

- **Attend a minimum of 5 meetings per year** (usually every 2–3 months)
- Respond in a timely fashion to any emails, WhatsApp or surveys outside meetings
- Respect and support other panel members and uphold Youth Talk's values

Meetings will usually be held in person (usually in St Albans) or online via Zoom. Meeting days will be alternated to give greatest opportunity for panel members to work around other commitments. Reasonable travel costs will be reimbursed, and access needs will be supported.

6 Support & Recognition

Panel members will receive:

- A named point of contact for support and questions
- Training and induction to help them feel confident in their role
- The option to receive a certificate, reference or LinkedIn endorsement for their contribution
- The opportunity to take on additional roles if they wish

We recognise that life can be unpredictable. If a panel member needs to step back temporarily or leave early, we will always work with them to do what's best.

Benefits of Being Involved

Youth Panel membership offers young people a chance to:

- **Have their voice heard** and influence decisions that shape Youth Talk's work
- **Meet new people** and be part of a supportive, like-minded group
- **Build confidence** in sharing views, contributing ideas and working with others
- **Try new experiences**, such as helping to organise events, surveys or creative projects
- **Take part in training opportunities**, for example on youth leadership, media interviews, or campaigning
- **Get involved in real decisions**, including opportunities to be part of projects and task and finish groups
- **Develop transferable skills** in communication, teamwork and problem-solving
- Gain **valuable experience** to include in a CV, job or university application – and be able to talk about it at interviews

Youth Talk is committed to making sure panel members feel that their contributions are valued, their voices are listened to, and their ideas lead to real change.

November 2025