

Young Advocates for Youth Justice: Application Guide

Please read these notes carefully before filling in your application.

1. What is the Young Advocates project?

The Young Advocates project supports children and young people aged 12-21 with youth justice experience to have a stronger voice on the system, by helping them to engage with their peers to shape decision-making for the better.

We train young people who have been affected by the justice system to:

- Become 'Young Advocates' for youth justice improvement
- Comment on important policy topics
- Collaborate with professionals
- Have face-to-face conversations about the youth justice system with other young people with similar experiences
- Influence policy and positive change in the system

In the first year the Young Advocates engaged with over 120 young people and presented their recommendations for change related to Education and Warning Signs, Stereotyping and youth custody to a range of audiences. Most recently the group co-authored and [published a report](#) that documents their findings and calls for change.

Support is tailored to individual needs and goals, previously this has included: mentoring, AQA accreditation, public speaking events, tailored training, external engagement opportunities, CV support, and careers advice. 50% of the group went on to secure paid work opportunities.

The Young Advocates Project is a partnership between [Leaders Unlocked](#) and the [Alliance for Youth Justice](#) (AYJ formerly SCYJ), supported by Children in Need. We are also supported by the [Young Adult Advisors on Criminal Justice](#) who also have experiences of the justice system and took part in a similar project.

2. Who can join the project?

We are looking for passionate young people who:

- Live anywhere in England and Wales
- Are aged 12-21
- Have personal experience of the justice system (such as: *school exclusion and alternative education, violence, policing and arrest, courts, Youth Offending Teams, and youth custody such as Secure Training Centres or Young Offenders Institutions*)
- Can be 'experts through their experience'

If you are a team player and willing to get involved with all the project's activities, then we want to work with you! We also want to make sure that the Young Advocates engage with and represent young people from a range of backgrounds and areas of the country.

3. If I join, what will I have to do?

Young Advocates will be asked to:

- **Take part in Young Advocates events:** As a team you will set goals for the project, reflect, and review the progress, and work with young adult advisors, staff and experts from the justice sector to develop work on priority areas. In these sessions you will develop skills and come up with creative ideas for workshops.
- **Lead on focused work in areas important to you:** You will build on the group's work on unequal opportunities, education, and custody, and develop approaches to tackling issues in the system that are most important to you.
- **Gather the views of young people:** We will help you run workshops and discussions with other young people who are passionate about the youth justice system, as we know the most honest conversations happen when young people talk to each other. As a rough guide, we would expect each Young Advocate to take part in at least 2 of these engagement days - but you're welcome to do more if you want to!
- **Feed back findings to decision-makers:** You will help us understand the most important points from the conversations you've had with your peers and share ideas for change with the AYJ alliance, policymakers and other professionals.

4. What will I get from being part of the Young Advocates?

As a Young Advocate, you will have the opportunity to:

- **Discuss issues with decision-makers:** You will meet key professionals from the justice sector and help them to understand what young people in your peer group think about the youth justice system, while learning more about how and why the system is the way it is.
- **Develop your skills and experience:** You will gain valuable skills and experience, that you can use for your CV and applications to further or higher education or employment. We also identify ongoing opportunities for each Young Advocate's personal development, including shadowing, volunteering and progression opportunities.
- **Represent the views of other young people:** You will amplify the voices of young people from different communities by helping them to get their views heard.
- **Meet new people:** You will meet a diverse range of other passionate young people from across England and Wales, and work alongside professionals from different organisations.

We will hold on 1-2 meetings a month, using a mixture of online and in-person meetings. In-person meetings will usually be held in London and travel expenses and lunch will be provided at each meeting.

5. How do I apply?

Please fill in the enclosed application form and email it to amania@leaders-unlocked.org or [complete the form here](#).

- If you are under 18, you must also fill out the section regarding your parent/guardian/carer. All members under the age of 18 will be asked to send a signed consent form before the first event.

6. What happens next?

After you submit your application, we will carry out telephone interviews with shortlisted applicants. **Remember: Please email your completed application form to amania@leaders-unlocked.org Good luck!**