**Youth Council Fact File**

To be a member of Youth Council you **must** be:

* aged 16-25 years old and living in the UK.
* diagnosed with autism.
* able to attend meetings and events in London and across the country (We will pay reasonable travel expenses, provide lunch and practical support so that you can take part and contribute).

We really want our Youth Council to represent the range and diversity of the whole autism spectrum. This means that we are particularly keen to hear from autistic young people who use assistive communication methods, those who also have a learning disability or have never been involved with Ambitious about Autism before. **You do not need to have any experience to apply.**

**What do the Youth Council do?**

* The Youth Council meet at least four times each year to discuss the issues most important to them, and work together to make real changes.
* They feedback to Ambitious about Autism about the work they are doing, and help us to work effectively to meet the needs of young autistic people in the UK.
* Our Youth Council members also act as ambassadors for Ambitious about Autism during their time with us and sometimes after they leave.
* Our Youth Council sometimes work with policy makers, businesses, the media and the general public on projects or events.

**How does Youth Council work?**

* You can be a member of Youth Council for a maximum of three years. However, if more than half of the Youth Council members are leaving at the same time, you may apply for an extra year.
* There are four Youth Council meetings every year but if less than four members are attending we will cancel the meeting.
* If you cannot attend a meeting, you must let us know. If you cannot attend two meetings in a row, we will have a chat with you about how we can support you to attend.
* Before the Youth Council meeting, you will be sent the agenda and worksheets for the day. You can request these papers in whichever format is best for you.

**Who will I be supported by?**

* The Youth Council is run by the Participation Manager and the Participation and Policy Assistant. These people will be the ones who contact you and will be at all meetings.
* If you need support on your journey to Youth Council meetings, the Participation and Policy Assistant can book tickets and pay reasonable travel costs for a support worker, carer, family member, partner or friend to accompany you.
* If you have specific support needs, please let us know. Our Youth Council is an open, inclusive and accessible place. We are happy to support you in any way you need in order to take part.

For example:

* Agendas and worksheets in EasyRead, with pictures and symbols for visual learners or printed on coloured paper.
* Being contacted by your preferred method – whether this is via phone call, text or email.
* Providing lunch suitable to your dietary requirements.
* Providing regular breaks and a quiet room for people to access during meetings.
* Sending photographs of the meeting venue and people attending before the meeting.
* Providing stim and fidget toys such as tangles, playdough, blue tack.

If you are successful in your application to Youth Council you will have to fill in a Volunteer Agreement with information about yourself. The Participation Team can support you with this. If you would like to meet our Participation Manager and Participation and Policy Assistant, or a current Youth Council member before the first meeting, this can be requested and arranged.

**Thank you for your interest in our Youth Council 🙂**