



YOUTH MANIFESTO

1. Tackle unemployment and create good quality jobs

Young people want to work yet we have the highest unemployment in any region of the UK. We need a range of jobs to suit different skills. Employers should be offered subsidies to give young people one years' paid work to gain the experience that they need. On the job training is one of the best of the best ways to learn. Zero hour contracts should be banned. Stop cutting funding to community initiatives that help young people get jobs

2. Increase funding to healthcare

More resources need to go into the NHS. In particular these should go towards cutting waiting times for GPs and Specialists. Mental health is a big issue for young people and others in their community. Problems are often made worse by unemployment, poor housing and not having enough money. Tablets are not always the answer.

3. Access to housing and benefits for those who need them

The points system doesn't work and it is very hard for young people to access housing. The level of paperwork and form filling makes it difficult for people to access the housing and benefits system.

Young people don't want to be on benefits and visiting job centres makes us feel looked down upon and judged.

Steps 2 Success doesn't help young people and is a waste of their time. Young people should be given a choice about what programme they want to do that best suits them. If you are doing a course you shouldn't have to sign on.

Start YOUTH MANIFESTO

Get going in the right direction

4. Integrated education and access to community based training

Integrated education is essential and there should be one school system across NI. Restorative justice should be used in schools to resolve issues instead of meaningless punishments.

Young people should be able to access education within their own communities and there should be more funding given to programmes like Start.

Asylum seekers should be allowed free access to courses while they are waiting on gaining their refugee status. Free childcare should be made available to all young parents.

5. Justice, a shared future and young people having their say

There should be more funding for community work which cuts crime. The age of criminal responsibility should be raised to 18. Crimes which involve drugs and alcohol should focus on rehabilitation rather than criminal charges.

We want a shared future which benefits all of our people with money put into reducing division and sectarianism. Politicians need to stop sham fighting in Stormont and deal with the issues.

We want young people to be properly consulted on decisions and to be part of the decision making process itself, for example, through youth councils, forums or partnerships that can put pressure on politicians. Participants must be from all areas, class, gender, and religion.

What next?

We will be sending our manifesto to every newly elected MLA in each of the Start areas to let them know what we, the young people, from Give & Take: Start Programme would like to see them focusing on over the next five years in government.

This Youth Manifesto was developed by young people on the Start Programme. For more of their stories, experiences and views follow:

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