

Camden Youth MP Election 2022

Zarin Bakhshzaad's Manifesto (page one)

Hi, my name is Zarin Bakhshzaad, I'm 15 years old and I'm running to be Youth MP of Camden. As a resident of Camden, I have experienced first-hand some of the issues that plague young people, and I am determined to help resolve them. Here are some key issues and how I believe I can tackle them:

Cost of living

After Covid, the cost of living has increased dramatically. If I become Youth MP, I will work with our local council to combat this in the following ways:

- More vouchers and coupons to low-income families.
- Fuel and energy vouchers for vulnerable groups.
- More funding into projects that help the community e.g., food banks and soup kitchens.

Climate change

Climate change is becoming a more and more prevalent problem as every day goes on, yet the government continues to do nothing. It is essential that we act as soon as we can and here is how I propose we do it:

- Schemes set up to require schools and businesses to recycle all recyclable material, and to aim to reduce their plastic usage.
- Open more recycling centres so that they are more accessible to everyone.
- Make more cycling pathways so that there is a safer way for students to cycle to school.

Education

Education is undoubtedly one of the most important aspects of our lives - it helps to set us up for the future. If I become Youth MP, I will increase funding for education services because they are what eventually shapes our future, so it is of utmost importance everyone gets the best start they can. Here is how we can do it:

- **A more diversified curriculum.** So many people feel underrepresented in lessons that seem to stick to a particular narrative. I will push for a curriculum that gives a voice to everyone, not just a select few.
- **More trips and out-of-classroom experiences.** There is a lot we learn in the classroom but there is just as much we can learn outside. Having more trips will help students learn more than just the textbook version of their work and explore how it ties into our society.
- **More extracurricular activities.** As young people we are at a stage where we want to experience new things and explore the different possibilities our future holds. One of the ways we do this is through extracurricular activities. I would increase funding and encourage young people to try new things and broaden their horizons as much as they can.
- **More apprenticeships and vocational opportunities.**

Mental health

Lockdown had an extremely adverse impact on young people, and it is important that they are given the support they need. Here is what I will do:

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Mental health (continued)

- Ensure that there are **more mental health counsellors in schools**, especially since some schools have one or two who often find themselves overbooked and overworked.
- **Routine check-ups on pupils.** There is still a stigma around mental health so having routine check-ups would be a good way for students who are apprehensive or wary to feel more comfortable talking about their feelings.

Knife crime / safety

Statistics show that Camden came in fourth place, when adjusted for population size, according to the Met Police's crime statistics for 2021. It is imperative that everyone feels safe in their own community but unfortunately both recent events and statistics show that this isn't necessarily the case in Camden. Here is what I propose should happen for us to not only feel safer but be safer:

- Relations with the police have been strained for quite some time and also because of recent events. Having police officers come into schools and youth clubs to talk to young people and allow them to ask questions on things they believe are affecting them is a good way to start fixing that relationship.
- There should also be a more significant reparations / punishments for officers who deal with civilians more harshly due to their prejudice / racism.
- Tackling knife crime is impossible without understanding why it happens in the first place. Some young people feel unsafe and use knives to protect themselves, so it is important to get to the root of the problem and make Camden's streets safer so that they no longer feel the need to do this. Police patrolling more is one way this can be achieved.

Support for those with special educational needs and disabilities

If elected I will bring in more support for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Studies have shown that lockdown has had a detrimental impact on those with disabilities. They became isolated, sometimes unable to go outside without their family, so it has been extremely difficult for them to cope. There is also a lack of funding, and it is extremely important that those with disabilities get the support they need and more.

- Increased funding in special schools will help children with learning difficulties get the opportunities to excel in life.
- More support for children with SEND and their parents / carers.
- Support for those who have suffered as a result of lockdown and help for them to get back on their feet.

Feel free to ask me any questions through my email: zarinbakhshzaad@gmail.com

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