

# James Greenhalgh

## MYP for Staffordshire 2006 -2008



Since winning the first of two elections back in 2005, I have got involved in all things UKYP, and by far my greatest achievement has been co-ordinating the massive national campaign against university tuition fees.

This has meant launching a national consultation, where the findings will be launched in a report at a special event in Parliament, a mass petition and meetings with local and national political figures – not to mention applying for funding to pay for it! So far, the campaign HAS influenced the decisions of the Government: the

maintenance grant threshold being increased significantly – making university cheaper for over 1/3 of the student population from next year.

This is by far my greatest UKYP achievement, but I have been involved in many other national and local campaigns and issues too, and just remember: you don't have to organise a massive campaign to make a difference.

There will be loads of burning issues you could tackle in your area (ranging from the closing of youth clubs and the cost of school buses to new football posts in a local village park) and if you work hard and keep up the momentum by the end of the year you could have made a significant impact locally!

There are many really worthwhile causes which you can campaign for and projects to get involved with, but its important to remember that

we're students and have many other commitments too. Not even the full time MPs in Westminster are able to do everything! You should aspire to take on some issues and not get disheartened if you can't do everything that you might want to be involved in.

The year ahead is probably going to be the best yet for UKYP, with the increasing awareness and credibility in the media and recognition of the organisation by the Government. All that's left to do is wish you the best of luck in what should be a fantastic year ahead with UKYP!

## MY TOP FIVE TIPS

1. Remember, you don't have to launch a massive national campaign to make a difference. There are loads of big issues in your local community which you could tackle, which could equally have a massive impact for some of the young people in your area.
2. Don't take on too much. It's better to do a few tasks really well than to take loads on and do a poor job. Concentrate on one or two projects but follow them through to the end!
3. Make sure your communication is well organised. Follow up letters and respond to your e-mails quickly – it's really important if you are to keep up with people and send the right message to those who contact you!
4. Be balanced with what you do. You are elected to represent the people of your constituency so make sure the opinions you express are representative of their views, and not yourself, even if you don't believe in the issue yourself.
5. Write down everything you need to do, and when it needs to be done by. As well as this, have a diary or planner – it's really important to **KEEP ORGANISED!**

# Natalie North

## MYP for Kirkless 2007 - 2008



'Scared, shy, quiet but curious' were just some of my feelings on the first day of being elected as an MYP. Getting involved felt like an accident, I turned up on a pre-election day, filled in a form and months later was being handed an MYP handbook. However, not for one moment do I regret being involved, looking back on the year though does seem a bit of a blur.

Everything I've participated in within the year hasn't been just me, it's been 'us' as Kirkless UKYP. Being an MYP is a privilege; I don't believe as an MYP I'm any different from

anyone within our group. The only difference, in my eyes, is having a vote on a national level, and even then I always tried to consult with young people before voting. After all, I represent young people, so realistically, it is their vote.

Our local campaigns for the year were bullying and the environment, these were picked through a poll at our election event. With bullying, we pushed for the recruitment of an officer with responsibility of bullying; this has recently been filled with a manager in place. We helped organise and facilitate an anti-bullying conference. For the environment campaign we produced a DVD that was previewed at the Kirkless Environment Partnership AGM. We hope this DVD will soon be made professionally to be used in schools to raise awareness of green issues.

Personally, I have worked on improving facilities for young

people with visual impairments, young people's access to sports projects funding, the Get Ready for Geneva Project, helping to set up a youth council in Kirklees and setting up visits to schools. Being an MYP has given me lots of opportunities: from being involved in the BT Seen and Heard awards, to launching the SRE report and chairing a meeting with a cabinet MP.

from this year, ranging from falling into a freezing lake during our residential, the pony game, to nearly missing a school assembly because I got on the wrong bus! My confidence has vastly improved during the year, and I've made lots of new friends both within Kirklees and nationally. As I reflect on the year my feelings have changed; 'happy, proud, and excited' about all the opportunities ahead!

I have many fantastic memories

## MY TOP FIVE TIPS

1. Have fun – Yes, being an MYP has a serious side to it, but it also has an extremely fun side to it, so make sure activities you participate in involve that fun side!
2. Be organised – Use a diary, plan your time, and plan meetings ahead of the time.
3. You represent all young people under the age of 18 – remember other young people may think differently to you, try and consult with young people, and find out what they think, and votes really are their vote.
4. Ask if you need help – help and support each other in your group, but also ask your youth worker if you need help, I would have been lost without mine!
5. Keep memories – After a year so much gets done, keep tickets, speeches, event programmes, photos and compile a scrapbook. It'll be great to look back at in the future.

# Sharon Skinner

**MYP for Brighton and Hove 2007 - 2008**



The year I spent being a Member of UKYP superseded all my expectations! I was elected through the newly formed Brighton and Hove Youth Council and was thoroughly excited about being part of this national organisation. Never did I imagine that I would be fortunate enough to have lunch with Gordon Brown or the Queen!

I must admit that juggling UKYP with school, friends, family and other commitments was challenging at times but I quickly learnt good time management skills and how to prioritise things. The experience has not only helped me to learn

these valuable life skills but was also enormously rewarding. I felt respected and listened to when speaking to most decision makers and I feel that is thanks to UKYP's growing profile and the support behind it.

The first major event I was invited to was a televised debate on Trident Replacement at the Imperial War Museum in London, where we debated with the Defence Secretary Des Browne. Soon after came the momentous day when the Queen visited Brighton and I was able to talk to her about UKYP. I was also given a place on the Children and Young People's Trust Board, a key decision making body which helped me to be directly involved.

I promoted one of UKYP's main campaigns – lowering the voting age to 16 – to the Minister for Constitutional Affairs, Bridget Prentice and the Ministry Of Justice which went

well. Gordon Brown's leadership campaign came in the middle of my term and I was invited to a lunch party that was held for him, again I used that opportunity to push votes at 16. I was then asked to write for our regional newspaper and had a photo shoot to go with it, which was a lot of fun! The Annual Sitting was in Glasgow and this was a fantastic event, I especially enjoyed meeting MYPs from all over the UK and learning about the different cultures and issues that young people faced. Throughout my term I liked writing for the

UKYP newsletter 'Debatable', and towards the end of my term I had my media highlight of the year which was to appear on BBC's The Politics show!

I have gained so much from this year, especially increasing my confidence and honing my public speaking skills, I also met some amazing people within UKYP! Finally, I would just like to say that you really will get out what you put into this. You have been given the opportunity of a lifetime, take it with both hands and make the most of it!

## MY TOP FIVE TIPS

1. Get Super ORGANISED – schedule your time and prioritise your commitments as you go along, don't let your school work suffer though.
2. Don't STRETCH yourself too thin – remember that you can say no. Only you know what is right for you, don't overload yourself with commitments.
3. Be BRAVE! Opportunities may come along that need you to talk to a large audience or meet someone very influential. Don't be scared, go ahead and try it.
4. Ask for HELP when you need it – there is lots of support out there for you so don't try and take on the world by yourself!
5. Don't forget your constituents, but also don't forget to have FUN!