



Giving Youth a Voice in Our Future

UK Youth Climate
Coalition



Spring 2026

Executive Summary



None of the issues we face have a 5-year limit. Reacting without considering future consequences is how we got into our current crisis, and considering future generations in government decision-making is how we get out of it

- Olivia, 27, Edinburgh North & Leith



On 17th March 2026, the UK Youth Climate Coalition attended an intervention organised by the School of International Futures and a coalition of civil society calling for a **Parliamentary Committee for the Future**. As a working group advocating for improving the representation of young people and young persons' issues in policymaking, we believe such a Committee has the potential to safeguard youth against future discounting and **embed intergenerational thinking into decision-making**.

And it's not just us who think this - we **surveyed young people** across our networks to bring their voices into the conversation. Indeed, a Committee for the Future should include mechanisms for youth participation if it is to fulfil its true potential. Here we present a snapshot of the results, expanding on what we presented on the day, as an act of walking the talk on **youth engagement in Parliamentary decision-making**.

Introduction

Many of the biggest challenges we face - from collapsing public services and the rising cost of living, to environmental crisis and violent conflict - are deeply rooted in a lack of long-term systems thinking, as governments continue to prioritise short-term interests and economic indicators over the wellbeing of people and planet.

In March 2026, the UK Youth Climate Coalition met with MPs working to advance plans for a parliamentary Committee of the Future, and shared the findings from our consultation of young people across the country, asking them to share:

1. Why long-term planning and protections for future generations are so important

2. The key challenges we face that future planning could help to address

3. The practical solutions needed to bring youth voices - and protections for current and future generations - into government decision-making

1. Why is future planning important for young people and future generations?

The message is clear - young people are fearful for our future, and angry about inheriting a range of crises that could have been mitigated, or avoided entirely, through long-term planning that puts the needs of people and planet first. There has to be intergenerational justice and fairness.

There is also hope: through seriously grappling with long-term thinking, we can unlock opportunity, have sustainable social progress, and become a more resilient society - now and in the future.



“Because my generation and the generations after me will have to deal with the consequences of today’s decisions”

- Jackson, 22, Hammersmith & Fulham

“I believe we should look out for one another as a principle, and that responsibility extends to those who will come after us.”

- Athena, 25, Peckham

“To allow resources to be redirected toward structural improvements rather than wasting them on temporary fixes that only postpone deeper problems.”

- Alexandra, 23, Edinburgh



2. The key challenges that future planning could help to address

Young people highlighted a huge array of challenges we face that could have been avoided through long-term planning; and that require urgent action to protect and empower future generations. The most commonly-raised issues included:

Energy and Environment

The escalating climate and biodiversity crises were raised by nearly every participant, often highlighting the danger to human as well as planetary health. Many respondents also emphasised connections and co-benefits for issues such as energy and food security, where environmental action can help maintain access and affordability.



"Energy security could have been achieved through consistent and rapid investment in renewables, which would have helped meet climate goals and avoided or lessened the cost of living burden felt by many."

- Sarah, 28, Brent East

Health and Public Services

Young people highlighted the obvious value of taking a long-term and preventative approach to health, addressing social and economic determinants of health outcomes; but also emphasised how the NHS and other public services are being run into the ground, and are in need of ambitious and transformative long-term investment.



“Poor health is a result of poor community, movement, nutrition and education. Those are long term investments that must be made to get better outcomes”

- Steph, 28, Bristol Central

Infrastructure and Housing

A top concern for many participants was the managed decline of infrastructure and housing, creating affordability crises for young people today, and passing on the costs and challenges of proper investment to future generations.



"Underinvestment in infrastructure, cuts to funding for the NHS and local government, and a housing policy that has resulted in high rents and poor prospects for home ownership."

- Nikhil, 25, Leeds North East

Migration and peacebuilding

Various young people highlighted the related challenges of hostility towards migrants and minorities, and foreign and development policies that contribute to global instability - in both cases, putting short-term political point-scoring over basic decency, as well as long-term economic considerations.



"Conflict prevention, peacebuilding and early warning systems require long-term thinking and investment to create a safer world."

- Ruth, 28, Queen's Park and Maida Vale

Economic transformation

A cross-cutting theme across many responses was the need to engage with the failure of our economic model - from fiscal rules that constrain long-term ambition, to an obsession with GDP growth while wellbeing outcomes decline.



"More indicators of economic success for policies to be measured on, focusing on GDP as the main success factor for the UK has led to growing inequalities. The integration of a wellbeing economy framework would help to protect current and future generations."

- Nicole, 28, Hackney South and Shoreditch

3. The solutions we need

Young people highlighted a range of powerful solutions - from protected decision-making processes that embed the rights and needs of future generations; to platforms for meaningful youth participation.

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“Protecting the wellbeing of future generations requires governments to embed sustainability, accountability and youth voices at the heart of decision-making”

- Claude, 28, Richmond

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Young people are calling for **innovation** in policy-making. Political parties can have different views on how to best address the needs of future generations, but there needs to be **cross-party** agreement that this needs to be explicitly and formally considered in all government decision making. Young people recognise the need to have **dedicated spaces** in government to focus on long-term and future-focused issues, offering examples including Future Impact Assessments, Future Generations Act & Commissioner and Wellbeing Economy Frameworks.

Critically, however, any policy mechanism for making decisions about the future must give a voice to those who will be impacted: young people. There must be **co-design, not just consultation**. Surveyed young people were already offering a range of exciting interventions to achieve this, such as youth boards, youth advisory councils, and young persons scrutiny panels.



"It's not about sacrifice, it's thinking how we can solve these problems while also benefitting people now"

– Anna, 29, Hackney South & Shoreditch

"Young people should be meaningfully participating in government decision-making, rather than being consulted at the last stage of the process."

– Harveet, 21, Leicester South

"Frameworks such as a Future Generations Act or wellbeing approaches could shift decision making toward long-term societal outcomes rather than short-term indicators."

– Arvind, 29, Blackpool South



Solutions must address both of these interconnected points: we need to do decision-making differently by **having novel mechanisms to protect long-term thinking AND ensuring meaningful youth participation**. Indeed, such an intervention can help to mitigate rapidly growing youth disenfranchisement in politics.

A Committee for the Future, as being proposed by the [School of International Futures](#), is an exciting proposition that could embed and protect long-term thinking in the heart of government. **UKYCC encourages any implementation of a Committee to go one step further and include mechanisms for youth participation from the start**. If we want to do public decision-making differently and achieve different outcomes, then we must try new mechanisms of decision-making. The urgency of the crises we are facing call for innovation, not a repeat of

the status quo.

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"A Committee for the Future would give MPs protected space to propose policies with delayed outcomes to the benefit of future generations."

- Sophie, 23, Islington South

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Call to Action

The intergenerational social contract is broken - and government has a responsibility to help fix it.

Young people are scared for their future and feel a sense of injustice at being let down across a range of cross-sector issues, including climate change, public health services, national infrastructure, peace-building, and how our economy is set up.

But young people recognise there are opportunities to do differently and achieve better outcomes for current and future generations. Looking at innovative mechanisms for shifting public decision making is one such opportunity. Critically, any intervention - such as a Committee for the Future - must protect long-term thinking and facilitate meaningful youth participation.

UKYCC are excited by the experimentation happening in this space and are actively working to explore what youth participation in long-term public decision-making looks like in practice.

If you are also working on this goal, whether you work in government or civil society, we want to hear from you. You can contact us at policy.advocacy@ukycc.org. Together, we can start building the future we want today.



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