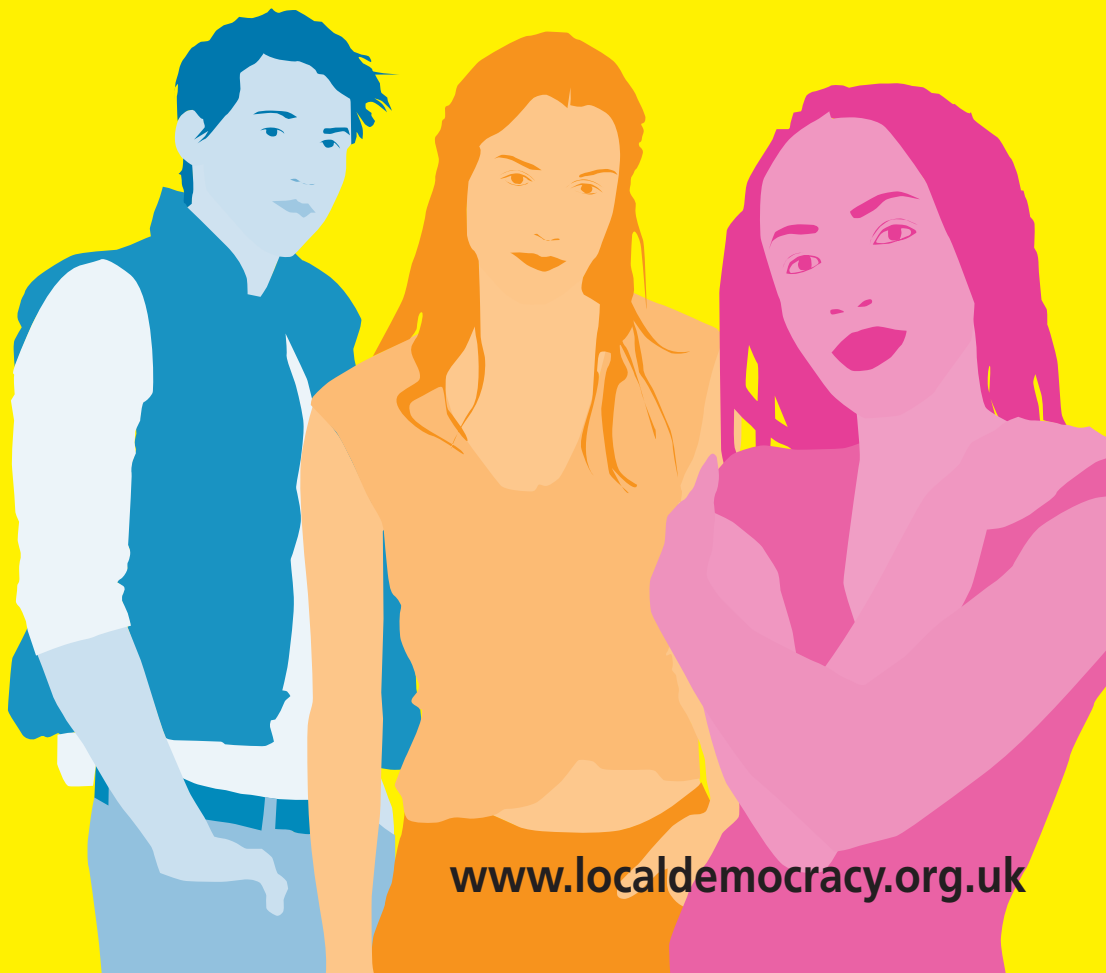


Local Democracy Campaign guide to...

bringing democracy to the classroom

The Local Democracy Campaign is about getting young people more involved with, and more aware of, their local council.



www.localdemocracy.org.uk

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What's it all about?

This contains a range of activities designed to help you deliver citizenship lessons with a focus on local democracy. The activities are fun, easy to do and are suitable for a range of ages.

How much lesson time will these activities take up?

The activities in this guide have a range of timings so no matter how much lesson time is available, you have you should be able to find something suitable for your school and students.

Do I need to do all of them?

No - just see which ones are right for you and your students.

What will my students get out of these activities?

These activities are designed to give young people a better understanding of how local democracy works and what their role in the local community is. Through learning about how the local council operates and having an opportunity to meet local politicians, students can develop the skills they need to be active citizens.

Where do these activities come from?

All of the activities in this guide have been tried and tested by schools, either working independently or with their local council.

Will my local council be interested in taking part?

Yes! Your council will have received their own version of this guide so they will be aware of the Local Democracy Campaign and of many of the activities in this booklet. Contact the Democratic Services department - through the main switchboard - and enquire about the possibility of working with them to deliver some of these activities to young people.

What will the council need to know?

- The name of the activity you would like the councillors to participate in
- The age group they will be talking to
- The number of students involved in the session
- Whether it will be part of a formal citizenship lesson.

Other things to think about include:

- What are the students (and you) expecting out of it?
- Have your students done something like this before?
- How many councillors/council staff you'd like to attend?
- Are there any topical issues in your area that would make a good theme?
- Remember that the councillor cannot show allegiance to any political party.

Feedback and evaluation

We're keen to hear what you thought of the activities in this pack, and especially how you used them and how they were received. Please use the simple feedback form enclosed and let us know. You can also use this form to shape future events. For a more comprehensive way of measuring the success and impact of the event you hold, especially how it will effect the lives of the young people involved, download and complete the 'What's changed' tool from The National Youth Agency website. (www.nya.org.uk/whatschanged)



I'm a councillor get me out of here

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A web-based, fun and interactive event which encourages...

- young people to get engaged with local democracy
- councillors to discover young people's feelings, concerns and enthusiasms
- a ready-made, memorable addition to citizenship lessons.

What you need...

- Audience: key stages 2 - 5
- Duration: overall, the event lasts two weeks (eg 8-19 October), but...
- One dedicated lesson needed for preparation and another to get online and started. There should also be time allocated daily for pupils to chat, check, quiz and vote
- Participation of local councillors
- Register with the www.bigvote.org.uk website
- Download the teacher's pack for the preparatory lesson
- Access to an ICT suite with internet access, or download our offline resources.

How you do it...

- Councils sign up to 'I'm a Councillor' and put forward up to six councillors to be grilled by students
- Competing local councillors post their manifestos on www.bigvote.org.uk
- Young people ask them questions, have online chats, answer quizzes
- Use the library section and learn more about local democracy
- Young people then vote for the councillor they want to win
- Teachers can pre-book live chats online and access lesson plans, tips and information sheets
- Even if the local council is not participating, teachers can still log on to the site (username: teacher, password: teacher)
- The site is secure and moderated by independent professionals
- The winner is announced during Local Democracy Week.

What you get out of it?

- Real, ongoing, democracy in action for students - they have their say and get to vote
- Fun and memorable - it creates a real classroom buzz
- The work's all done for you - lesson plans and resources are provided
- Helps local councillors to understand the issues of young people, and local schools.

For more information or to receive a participation pack:

Email: sophia@bigvote.org.uk

Tel: 01225 869413

Website: www.bigvote.org.uk

Political speed dating

What you need...

- Audience: key stage 3 and above
- Duration: one/two lessons
- Political speed dating pack (see below)
- A similar number of young people and councillors taking part (up to 15 each)
- The venue (classroom / gym / assembly hall) set out with chairs facing each other around the room.

How you do it...

- The DVD features a compere, 'Big D Mocracy', who introduces the game and leads everyone through each stage, and a set of score cards
- Everyone sits opposite each other, councillors on one side, young people on the other
- The young person can ask three questions in three strict minutes before the gong sounds
- Young people stay where they are; the councillors move on to the next young person
- Each councillor is graded and a winner evaluated.

What you get out of it...

- Young people love it - they get to discuss the most important issues to them, and get a sense of the difficult and important decisions councillors make
- Councillors love it - it's a fun, quick and convenient way for them to meet young people on a one-to-one basis, and get a sense of their most important issues.

To request the free political speed dating pack:

Email: localdemocracy@lga.gov.uk

Tel: 020 7664 3131

Download: www.campaigns.lga.gov.uk/localdemocracy/resources

Pupil power

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Developed in partnership with Lancaster and Preston City Council, 'Pupil Power' is a children's card game, based on the popular 'Pokemon' trading cards.

What you need...

- Audience: key stages 2 & 3 (perhaps in groups of 4-8)
- Duration: one lesson
- Pupil power pack (see below)
- A councillor or senior officer to act as facilitator
- A classroom
- Additional activities lined up to fill a day/half-day of democracy flavoured activities from this guide.

How you do it...

- Children select a chair, a banker and a scribe, from amongst themselves
- Children encouraged to address the chair as 'Mr/Madam Chair'
- Councillor should assist the chair to steer the meeting through helpful questions
- Lay out the cards for discussion
- Children debate and select which services they want to buy, explaining why
- Children are allowed to buy and sell services until they have expended their budget.

What you get out of it...

- Children take on roles of responsibility - so get an understanding of both the role of the council, and the financial constraints on its decision-making
- Introduction to breadth and costs of council services
- Councillor/officer should act as a devil's advocate in stimulate and steering the debate, the councilor must adapt council language for younger ears
- Can be combined with 'If I were in charge for a day I would...' and 'What is a mayor' challenges.

To request the free pupil power pack:

Email: localdemocracy@lga.gov.uk

Tel: 020 7664 3131

Download: www.campaigns.lga.gov.uk/localdemocracy/resources

Question time

"Who needs David Dimbleby when you've got a room full of 19-year-olds asking challenging questions about things that matter to them?"

What you need...

- Audience: key stages 3 - 5 and at least three speakers
- Duration: minimum one/maximum two lessons (in one session)
- Download 'Doing the debate' - the LDC guide to putting on a question time style debate (see below)
- A theme for the discussion - relevant to the young people
- A venue - classroom / gym / assembly hall
- Some questions (encourage young people to choose beforehand).

How you do it...

- Target the adult panel participants (or those to be questioned) appropriate to the theme (ie crime = police officer, negative perceptions = local newspaper editor)
- Have a reserve list of panel members
- Record the event by taking notes and photos - or filming it
- State an objective for the session and look for specific action points or commitments from the organisations represented
- Challenge participants to follow up any promises made
- Arrange for a feedback session or process.

What you get out of it...

- Participation in a popular and familiar TV-style debate
- Helps break down communication barriers between young people and their councillors, politicians or representatives
- Panel members can get their messages across to young people
- Young people increase their appreciation of the democratic process
- They can also get answers to issues that matter to them.

To request the free political speed dating pack:

Email: localdemocracy@lga.gov.uk

Tel: 020 7664 3131

Download: www.campaigns.lga.gov.uk/localdemocracy/resources

Mayor for the day

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"Make a young person a 'Mayor for the Day', not just show them around as a guest of the Council"

What you need...

- Audience: key stage 2 and above
- Duration: half to full day (in conjunction with other activities) - more than a lesson!
- An obliging and agreeable council
- A process to appoint the 'Mayor for the Day' (MftD) (perhaps a competition or classroom election)
- Manifesto or plan of action for the MftD when in office (this could be the basis of the above competition - 'three things you would change if you were mayor for the day')
- The local media interested.

How you do it...

- Combine MftD with other activities from this guide to provide a full (or half day) of democracy flavoured initiatives
- The chamber can be used to hold the election for MftD, hold a mock (or real) council meeting with MftD leading, play the pupil power game,
- Work on and with your council colleagues - what they are prepared to do for the MftD is important
- Get a date and commitment from officers and organisations
- Are you inviting just the MftD - or their class/school/group as well?
- Work with local schools/youth groups in advance and decide on the process to select MftD
- Things to think about providing for the MftD:
 - a slot at a full council meeting
 - a budget to allocate/spend (real/hypothetical)
 - junior robes or badge of office
 - time with the real mayor
 - writing a manifesto
 - a visit on behalf of/accompanying the real mayor

- If the MftD is coming with a group, prepare some questions to start a discussion amongst the young people, ie what would you do as mayor, what changes would they make to their community, what speeches would they give, where else would you like to be mayor
- Arrange transport and refreshments for the young people if not done via school.

What you get out of it...

- Young people get to see how the council works
- Young people get to find out more about what their council does for them, and how they can get involved
- Can provide specific experiences such as, election process, budget management, decision-making, partnership working, leading an organisation.

Mock elections

"Bring the excitement of a real election to those not yet old enough to participate in the political process with the 'Y Vote' mock elections toolkit"

What you need...

- Audience: key stage 2 - 5
- Duration: minimum one lesson (for just the election process)
- A partnership with your local council
- The 'Y Vote' mock elections toolkit from the Hansard Society (see below)
- Time in the school / council chamber to stage election / results announcement
- A range of accompanying activities to fill a day (or half day).

How you do it...

- Work with the young people over a period of time, helping facilitate the election
- Invite them to the council buildings and arrange a day of democratic activities from this guide (with a significant activity held in the chamber)
- Arrange for voting slips, ballot boxes and appropriate voting conditions
- Have a counting system prepared
- Announce and reward winning candidate (eg the winner could be Mayor for the Day - see page 6).

What you get out of it...

- All the high drama, intense decision-making and mass participation of a real election
- Provides the opportunity to stand as party candidates, speech-writers and canvassers
- Young people recognise and follow a democratic process relevant to them
- It is an interactive and interesting active citizenship resource and actively engages pupils with political, social and moral issues.

To request the Y Vote toolkit:

Email: hansard@hansard.lse.ac.uk

Tel: 020 7438 1222

Download: www.mockelections.co.uk

Take your councillor to school

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"Attending my local school has dispelled many myths and provides a fascinating insight to young people today"

What you need...

- Audience: key stage 2 and above
- Duration: half or full day - again, not confined to one class or lesson
- The event scheduled alongside other citizenship projects
- Willing councillor(s)
- Plan for the visit/day.

How you do it...

- Check the LDC website to see if a particular day of Local Democracy Week has been allocated as 'Take your councillor to school day' - can you tie in with this?
- 'Take your councillor to school' is a flexible title! It could be a Mayor, or an MP or another elected representative. The important element is the location
- Agree days, dates and available times for both parties
- If taking the councillor to school, it should be for the whole day and they should expect to take part in a full day's curriculum alongside young people- perhaps even PE!
- Arrange a time for the councillor to give feedback to the young people
- Encourage the arrangement of a reciprocal visit so the young people can see the councillor in action.

What do you get out of it?

- Young people are visited in an environment in which they are comfortable
- Young people will have the opportunity to ask questions about the councillor's role too
- Both parties start to build a relationship
- Each party shares day-to-day experiences
- An opportunity to demonstrate to councillors the pressures faced by young people, and how busy and hectic a school environment can be!

To request the 'MPs in school' pack:

Email: citizenship@hansard.lse.ac.uk

Tel: 020 7438 1222

Download: www.hansardsociety.org.uk

Who runs this place?

"Absolutely brilliant...the best way of getting local government and democracy to young people I have ever seen..."

Babergh District Council

What you need...

- Audience: max 65 young people per performance (key stage 3 and above)
- Duration: 60 minutes (one lesson) plus time for set-up/break-down and optional workshops 60 mins
- Funds to pay the Solent People's Theatre (from £1200 for two performances)
- A free day in the school's diary when the production is available *
- Consideration of the extra options from SPT to fill up the day - the 'Local Democracy Day' package (full-day activity including political speed dating), extra workshops, the 'resource pack' (see website for further details).

How you do it...

- The SPT will do all of the work on the day. All you have to do is: invite the participants and provide a venue and refreshments
- Each show is a mad-cap, lively performance, drawing on a variety of theatrical conventions and movie parodies
- The humour works on many levels making the show ideal for anyone who wants to know 'who runs this place'
- Throughout the performance high quality multimedia animations and music are used to help illustrate potentially confusing subject matter
- Two different interactive workshops are available to accompany the performances and include a hi-tech audience voting system.

What you get out it...

- A 'citizenship show with a difference'
- The production allows the audience to find out how local government works
- Shows the difference between county, district, borough, metropolitan and unitary councils
- Discusses the difference between councillors and council officers
- Explains council tax and why we have to pay it, and also explores local government finance, CCT and Best Value.

For over 30 years, the Solent Peoples Theatre has toured with a mix of high quality theatre and participatory work. It is the creators, in partnership with the LGA, of the Political Speed Dating game (see page 3).

Email: bookings@solentpeoplestheatre.com

Tel: 023 92 423399

<http://www.solentpeoplestheatre.com/>

* Last year, SPT were fully booked during and around Local Democracy Week - so reserve your autumn performances early, to save disappointment AND to receive a discount

Working in local government

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"We use the IDeA local government careers materials in the careers section of the school library. They are an excellent way to introduce pupils to democracy and are very popular."

What you need...

- Audience: key stage 3 - 4
- IDeA local government careers brochures and leaflets
- Access to IDeA's careers information on the web - www.LGtalent.com
- Access to IDeA's additional resources for schools, including lesson plans
- Councillors/council officers.

How you do it...

- Contact your local council and arrange a visit from local councillors and/or council officers
- Run a lesson introducing local government and the public services it provides - this could also support citizenship lessons
- Hold a local government careers day/event, at which the invited councillors/council officers talk to students about the work they do, the variety of careers that exist within the council and the opportunities for young people
- Invite students to ask questions and discuss what they have heard - encourage them to consider the contributions that councillors/officers make to the local community
- Encourage students to think about their own contribution to the community - how could they get involved?

What you get out of it...

- Students learn about local government work directly from councillors/officers
- Students are able to make better informed career choices
- The school is able to build links with the local council and gain support for other events/lessons in future, such as citizenship lessons and democracy days
- Access to free careers resources for your school careers library.

To order IDeA's career publications and find out more:
www.LGtalent.com or email: ihelp@idea.gov.uk

To access IDeA's additional resources for schools, email:
liz.copeland@idea.gov.uk

Useful contacts

This section provides you some web links to organisations that support the Local Democracy Campaign and who can provide guidance and information on citizenship and young people issues.

The **Association of Citizenship Teachers** is the professional subject association for those involved in citizenship education
www.teachingcitizenship.org.uk

The **Big Vote** website is the home of I'm a councillor, get me out of here!, one of the campaign's key activities, and is managed by Gallomanor Communications.
www.bigvote.org.uk/

The **British Youth Council** is the national youth council for young people in the UK - aged under 26 - involved as individuals and through youth organisations.
www.byc.org.uk/

Democracy Coalition for Children and Young People is an alliance of non-governmental, voluntary and statutory organisations working together to increase children and young people's participation in democracy.
www.democracycoalition.org.uk/

The **Electoral Commission** has published the Democracy Cookbook, a comprehensive resource pack containing independent information about how politics works.
www.dopolitics.co.uk

The **Hansard Society** is an independent, non-partisan educational charity, which exists to promote effective parliamentary democracy.
www.hansardsociety.org.uk/

The **Local Government Association** exists to promote better local government. It is the organising body of the Local Democracy Campaign.
www.lga.gov.uk

Solent People's Theatre is the creator of Political Speed Dating, and a touring company with many more democracy-inspired productions.
www.solentpeoplestheatre.com/

The Edge is the NYA's quarterly newspaper on youth affairs for councils and councillors.
www.nya.org.uk/Templates/internal.asp?NodeID=92539

The **National Youth Agency** promotes young people's personal and social development, and their voice, influence and place in society.
www.nya.org.uk

Young People Now is the magazine for those that work with young people.
www.ypnmagazine.com

www.localdemocracy.org.uk

Please visit the site to find out more about the campaign, discover how you can get involved, download a range of resources and show your support for the campaign.

You can also contact LGconnect for further information on
T. 020 7664 3131
E. localdemocracy@lga.gov.uk