

Connor Fox, Member of Youth Parliament for Central North Yorkshire

My name is Connor Fox and I am the member of youth parliament (MYP) for central NY including Selby, Richmondshire, Thirsk and Hambleton. One of my main points for the election was to push for the improvement of free school meals, as this was an issue raised to me by many young people and parents alike. During my time as MYP I have taken part in a roundtable with a baroness with regards to education. My section focused on free school meals, as well as contacting my MP Rishi Sunak and keeping him informed on my work.

At the start of 2023 I carried out a survey asking questions about free school meals which received 250 responses. I have compiled a report based on this survey where I outlined the main issues raised by responders and offered my opinions on possible improvements to be made. From this survey I created a petition for the improvement of free school meals, which has also been sent out to various schools.

However to answer the question of why this is an issue within North Yorkshire according to the department of education there are 12,767 children eligible for free school meals (as of Jan 2022), this is 15.4% of all state school pupils in the area. This is a prevalent issue now more than ever in this unprecedented cost of living crisis affecting our country and local area.

It is not just myself taking action on this issue, the UK Youth parliament had many policies submitted to be included in our national manifesto (My own policy to improve free school meals included). This eventually became our key focus as seen through the 2023 Spill the tea campaign and the aforementioned roundtables with key decision makers in the government.

In fact as we speak the UKYP is preparing to meet in parliament and discuss our key issues raised with regards to FSM. The annual conference saw many MYP's including myself speak on the matter, with my own speech being on the importance of free school meals vouchers in the holidays. While programmes do exist for families to attend, this is not good enough, the issue lies that many families do not want to attend sessions and expose their situation. Vouchers are an anonymous form of help and do help as shown through my attached survey report.

As well as the wider campaign I have worked on, youth councils also play a role in my work. For a time Bedale youth council was a running YC with members where we held sessions and even held a session for young carers day earlier this year. Though due to extenuating circumstances the membership dwindled and the YC disbanded. However it is still my goal to work on youth representation as I have done through working with the newly created Selby youth council.

I hope I have informed you well and look forward to attending your next meeting to offer my insight and experience in this key issue facing our local families and young people alike.

vv

My FSM survey report: [Free school meal report.pdf](#)

FSM report in QR code form ----->

Link to my free school meals petition below

