

Candidate Name : Afeefa Haroon

Age : 15

Connection to the Borough: Residence and School

My name is Afeefa Haroon and I feel extremely proud and privileged to receive this opportunity to run for youth mayor. I've grown up here, just like you. I go to school here, I spend time with my friends here. Every day, I see the depth of talent, drive and potential that young people across Wandsworth have to offer and can bring to our community. But even as a 15 year old girl, I also see that too many of us feel like our voices don't really count when decisions are made about our future.

I want to help create opportunities that are actually accessible to us, and spaces that reflect what we need.

Ultimately, for me, my definition of being a youth mayor is bridging the gap between young people like us and the positions of responsibility and local council to create a heard, supportive environment.

My Key Priorities:

- 1) **Making Mental Health More Accessible and Relatable** - Most mental health information feels confusing, clinical or hidden in leaflets nobody reads, and school social workers/services can feel daunting. That's why I will campaign for a Wandsworth youth Q&A website where peers our age respond anonymously and securely, making it easier to feel heard, less alone, and find clear signposts to local support.
- 2) **The Creative Careers Studio** - I will aim to set up a weekly drop-in at youth clubs or libraries with guest speakers from creative industries running practical workshops. This would help us build portfolios for universities or jobs and make smarter career choices, as well as tackle the nearly 950,000 young people across the UK who are currently NEET(Not in Education, Employment or Training)
- 3) **Supporting Under-Represented Communities and Young People Including SEN** - I will work together with local charities that will bring their expertise into mainstream youth spaces to promote more inclusive activities, clearer visual information and regular listening sessions. This will ensure that vulnerable and marginalised young people have their say and contribute to council priorities.

Too often, young people are reduced to stereotypes- seen as disengaged, distracted or lacking ambition. But this isn't the reality I see in Wandsworth — young people here care deeply, think creatively, and want their voices to matter. As a young Asian girl, I understand how important it is to feel represented and included in the spaces where decisions are made. Every young person here, regardless of their background, deserves to feel that they belong and that their voice matters.

If I am elected, I will work to make sure more of our voices are heard and more of our perspectives are included in the decisions that affect us. This role should be about fairness, representation and genuine change, not just empty promises.

I'm not here to speak for you — I'm here to speak with you, and to make sure Wandsworth listens.

