



Young Combined Authority

Young Combined Authority (YCA) Board update, March 2024

Update

Our new YCA Cohort has been busy settling into their new roles, with the YCA Relaunch in January and priority setting in February.

On 5th January, we officially welcomed our new members of the Young Combined Authority. Legacy members joined the event to share “passing the baton speeches.” The Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street, and Laura Shoaf were also in attendance to give new members a warm welcome and some insights into what it’s like to be a leader. The new YCA members also heard from colleagues across the WMCA’s Transport, Environment, and Inclusive Growth teams, to help build an understanding of different policy areas.



Richard Barlow - *“It is both an honour and a heartfelt responsibility to share the remarkable journey of the West Midlands Young Combined Authority (YCA) and to pass the torch to the new cohort poised to continue our legacy.... As we pass the baton, our achievements serve as a foundation for the new cohort. From influencing regional policies to pioneering collaborations at the National YCA Mayoral meetings, our collective voice has resonated. Embrace the challenges, cherish the victories, and remember that your voices, even when questioning authority respectfully, have the power to shape the future.”*

Hamaam Shire - *“I remember being in your exact position back in 2021 during the Covid era, believe it or not, I was incapable of public speaking let alone speaking to one or two people. On top of this, I was extremely shy and I had no passion or interest in youth voice or advocacy. I only applied to the board with the wrong intentions of filling my CV up and leaving. However, I can confidently say that because of joining the CA and getting to work with my incredible colleagues and friends. As time went on, I gained a real thirst and hunger to fight for young people and represent them on a local and national level.”*

Diversity in Civic Leadership - Charity Trustee Roundtable

YCA Legacy Member, Simren Johal, helped to open the roundtable by sharing her experiences on the YCA Board and how it has led her to join the B Music Youth Board. The rest of the evening explored good practice for increasing diversity across charity trustees, barriers to change and how these can be addressed, and what support residents may need to find, secure and thrive in a trustee role.

Simren Johal - *“My journey to governance began right here with the West Midlands Combined Authority’s very own Young Combined Authority. I joined this board as a shy 17 year old with a hint of social anxiety, who most definitely would not be delivering a speech to a room full of people. Being a part of this board changed me for the better, allowing me to gain confidence and learn so much from other people. The Young Combined Authority was very diverse which helped to broaden my mind and welcome in new perspectives. Having a diverse board helped us to achieve great things from influencing local transport plans to organising our very own Mental Health Youth Summit. Young people can achieve great things when they are given a space to voice their opinions and have the ability to create sustainable change.*



Making Levelling Up Happen: Lessons from Europe Conference

YCA Legacy Members joined students from the State Student Council of Saxony to explore the difference between the German and British Youth engagement and how it informs policy. They then went onto speak on the impact that devolution can have on young people.

YCA February Meeting

YCA Members heard from the WMCA Nighttime Economy Officer to understand the work they are doing around women’s safety and the Race Equalities Taskforce on their work on tackling racial inequality in the region. They also lent their voices for the West Midlands State of the Region video.

YCA members also discussed and finalised their priority areas for the year ahead, voting for:

- Homelessness
- Economy
- Racial Inequality

YCA members will now be working towards hosting second annual Youth Summit in partnership with the West Midlands Race Equalities Taskforce.

Any questions, please email: Miriam.Aslam@wmca.org.uk