



# Young Mayor of Lewisham



**Election  
2019**



**Candidate  
statements**

**Please read carefully  
before casting your vote**



Damien Egan,  
Mayor of  
Lewisham



## Message from Damien Egan, Mayor of Lewisham

Lewisham is one of the most diverse places in the world and home to thousands of passionate young people. Our young mayor programme is proof of that. Now in its 16th year, it was the first of its kind in the country. From speaking at high-profile debates to setting up a youth climate forum, to carrying the Olympic torch, Lewisham's previous young mayors have made our borough proud.

Our young people care deeply about Lewisham and want to change it for the better. The young mayor programme has given them the opportunity to get engaged in politics and put their ideas into practice.

I encourage you to read about the candidates and cast your vote. You may not yet be old enough to vote in a general election but democracy starts early in Lewisham.

Good luck to all the candidates standing in this year's election!

For more information about the work of the young mayor and the election process visit [www.lewisham.gov.uk/youngmayor](http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/youngmayor)

## What is the role of a young mayor?

The young mayor gives young people in Lewisham a real say in the future of the area.

Lewisham young people have a lot to say about issues that affect them such as schools, the environment, health, crime and safety, and much more. It is important that they are involved when decisions are made that will impact on their lives.

This is why Damien Egan, Mayor of Lewisham, and the Council agreed there should be a young mayor, someone who would represent young people and make sure their views are heard. In 2019–20, the young mayor will have a budget of £25,000 to spend on improving the lives of young people in Lewisham.

## How to vote

Anyone aged 11–17 who lives, works or studies in Lewisham can vote in the election. Everyone in a secondary school or sixth form college will be allowed to vote in a polling station at their school or college on polling day and will be given a ballot paper and asked to cast their vote for first and second choices for young mayor.

The candidate who comes in second place will become the deputy young mayor. Third and fourth place will have the opportunity to represent Lewisham as members of the UK Youth Parliament.

## Time to decide

Last year, 9,617 young people voted, which was a turnout of 58.37% and Adam Abdullah, pictured above, was elected Lewisham's fifteenth young mayor. Now it's time for you to decide who you want to represent you and make a difference to young people in Lewisham.

There are 29 candidates standing in this year's election. This booklet contains their election statements which explain why they want to be young mayor and what they will do for young people if elected.

So, please read this carefully and make sure you vote on Wednesday 16 October so you can have your say on who will represent you.



Adam Abdullah  
Young Mayor of  
Lewisham  
2018–19

**ONLY ONE OF  
THESE CANDIDATES WILL  
BE YOUNG MAYOR.**

**ONLY YOU CAN MAKE  
THAT CHOICE.**

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## Abigail Adesanya

I've lived in Lewisham all my life. I want to stand for young mayor of Lewisham for the following reasons:

### Mental health

- Did you know that one in eight children go through mental health issues such as depression and anxiety?
- Therefore counselling in schools should be easily available to more children so they can open up their feelings right away.

### Seen but not heard

The belief that young people should be seen but not heard means they are judged on their behaviour and appearance but not on their voices.

- For me a change is an opportunity to make a difference.
- I would like young people to be heard and seen in a positive light.
- This would be through an event called 'Seen but not heard'.

Want to be seen and heard? Vote for Abigail Adesanya.



## Tolani Akinfolarin

Hello, my name is Tolani and I aspire to be the young mayor of Lewisham for these three reasons:

1. There should be more athletic competitions. As an athlete I've had experiences that not many have received. In school, it's not fair that only the best performing students are chosen to compete but the people that want to have the experience are shut down. I want to change that. I want to try and provide opportunities for everyone. This can also improve the crime rate, which is a big issue. I cannot promise to abolish it, but I can try to find solutions to circumvent/avoid it.
2. Youths should be taught more life skills. I believe that developing skills such as communication, self-discipline and co-operation can have a positive effect on our future careers. I wish to create workshops to teach life skills.
3. Being encouraged to do the right thing. We should take more responsibility when witnessing bad situations rather than putting it on social media.

These are not my only ideas. I hope they will be carried out with your help. My good leadership skills could be just what Lewisham needs!

My name is Tolani. Vote for me. I am the voice.

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## Isabella Bendito

My name is Isabella Bat' El Campos Bendito. I'm 14 years old and I attend Sydenham School for girls. If you vote for me, I will make Lewisham a safer place for everyone, whatever their gender, age or race. I will seek to decrease the rate of crimes affecting teenagers' lives and education throughout the borough of Lewisham, so that teenagers feel safe around school and also at school. Furthermore, if you vote for me I'll be determined to help those who have special needs to be able to fit in with the rest of the pupils at their school, whether that's a social or physical problem. There have been numerous amounts of crime in the borough of Lewisham, which leaves students feeling unsafe walking around the streets of Lewisham – and parents feeling worried for their child's safety. I am determined to make all that go away. Let me put your safety first, before anything else.

Vote for Isabella Bendito as your young mayor of Lewisham for a safer environment for you and your friends. Thank you.



## Zack Boyd-Prowse

I would envisage the youth volunteering during the half-term break. The intention would be for children to volunteer e.g. to pick up rubbish or remove/paint over graffiti. This would save both the environment and money. Money saved could be spent on rewarding volunteers, thus keeping them motivated, for example by offering them day trips to various activities. This could help with preventing them from committing crimes as they will now have something to do in half-term with incentives.

I would also like to see a competition for young people's business ideas, with grants for those that are most popular.

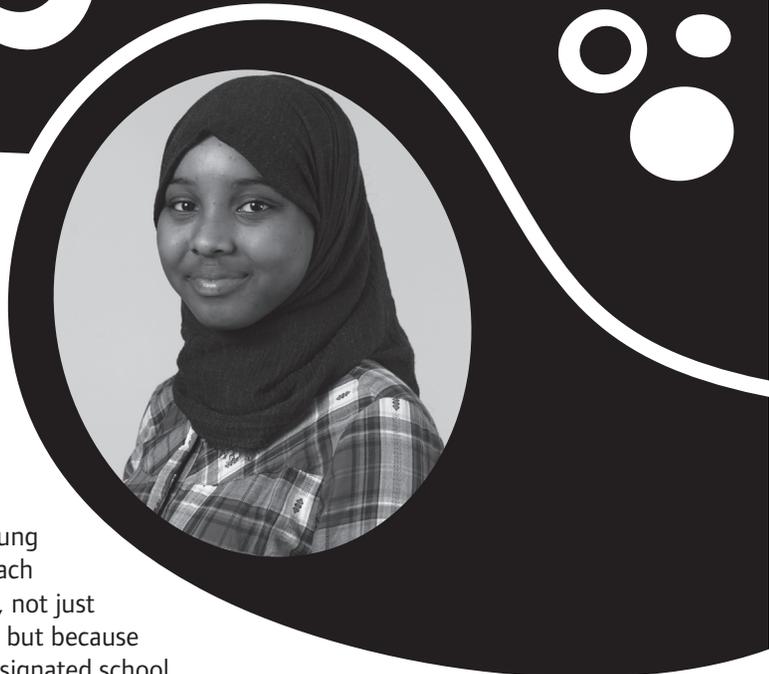
This leads to my campaign slogan, 'No one is perfect, everyone is different.'

Goodbye.

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## Shamso Buule

If I was to become young mayor of Lewisham I would work towards students being educated in all aspects of the world around them and not just the subjects that school provides. As young people, we are underestimated and not given enough chance to reach our full potential. First of all I would have first aid courses provided, not just because of knife crime and that we don't live in the safest of areas, but because it's a life skill. Second of all, I feel that all schools should have a designated school councillor. This is a crucial time in our lives that will determine our futures, and most schools don't have a school councillor – or students are not aware of what they do. Third of all, I want to change the school curriculum to fit in lessons where we'll be informed about how to pay our taxes or how to get a mortgage. We're taught all the skills needed to fit the requirements of our dream jobs but not taught about what comes afterwards. I am honest and say things how I see them. I am passionate about what I'm doing and determined to make it work.



## Aizenose Ejedenawe

Hi, my name is Aize Ejedenawe and I am running as young mayor of Lewisham. I've decided to run because I believe Lewisham is such a beautiful place - full of diversity, opportunities and chances for us to take advantage of. Yet it doesn't get the promotion it needs and deserves. Things like workshops and youth clubs are both fun and informative ways to get points across without being boring. Instead, these are being replaced by the pressure of studying. Now I believe that education is very important, but what I think is just as important is our mental health and wellbeing. The pressure of getting good grades and studying stresses us out, so I think workshops and youth clubs are also the perfect way to help us relax. I also think we should be able to take pride and passion in the things we love and should be able to be successful in them. Now I could also go on and on about gang violence, drug abuse and rape, but more than just being warned about these, I'd rather we were taught to protect ourselves. We need our voices to be heard and to be taken seriously, and I think I can be a doorway to the people's voice.

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## Faith Ellis-Graham

If I was elected as young mayor of Lewisham I would increase awareness of knife crime and homophobia, because the people of Lewisham should know what homophobia or knife crime can do to people and families. Also, I would raise awareness of youth clubs and show what they're capable of giving. This would help to take people off the streets of Lewisham.

I would call for more opportunities for girls' football, and for other sports to be improved in Lewisham. I would also create awareness of climate change, but I would do it in a more artistic way, by using music or art e.g. spray painting.



## Rio Elliott

I'm running for young mayor and I am sick and tired of the stigma and the stereotypes that surround Lewisham and its young people. I'm also passionate about letting the culture and diversity of Lewisham people be showcased across our borough for everyone to see.

As young mayor I would try hardest to give young people a voice, and shake the age-old idea that we are uneducated and lazy, when the reality is that we are intelligent and hardworking.

Secondly, I would strive to make Lewisham a brighter, cleaner place. London has illegal levels of pollution, and I would make it a priority to help improve that statistic, starting with my own borough.

Lastly, I would fight to eliminate phobic attitudes (racism, homophobia, sexism etc) because they just hold us back and cause senseless pain. We all deserve to be who we are, free from judgment and prejudice.

To reiterate, with me as young mayor, you would be supporting a move towards a brighter, more positive Lewisham that is eager to be the best we can be as a community. Vote for me on 16 October 2019!

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## Vedish Gurung

The three things I would change in Lewisham are:

1. Raising awareness among youth about young people with disabilities. Young people with disabilities experience lots of rejection, feelings of loneliness and isolation from their peers. It seems society has still not fully integrated youth with disabilities. Greater awareness and understanding of disabilities are fundamental to improving the life experiences of young people with disabilities.
2. Tackling the problem of school transportation. We would add more buses during school time to prevent children from losing their learning time and of course from being given late detention.
3. Promoting youth centres. Youth centres are the place where young people can meet and participate in a variety of activities. It helps young people to understand the environment around them and even volunteer to do many things, and I would promote them by working with Youth First.

So before I finish off, my name is Vedish and I hope you vote for me so we can improve the community.



## Ilayda Havali

As young mayor, I would continue the great work the team have started regarding knife crime, as I feel combatting this problem from the root with our young community is the only way to make a positive change for our future.

Having suffered at the hands of bullies in the past I would work to raise awareness around mental health, confidence and wellbeing in young people. I was lucky enough to have support from Compass and CAMHS in the borough. However, I feel young people need to be made more aware of the immediate help that is available when they are having problems.

As a keen footballer, I would like to organise more sports events for girls in Lewisham. I recently took part in the Millwall summer football club and it inspired me to get a team set up at my school.

I love to dance and would like to see more young people take part in activities that they are passionate about. Due to small budgets, many households sometimes cannot afford these additional costs.

I would like to see more free activities in the borough that promote healthy living and keep young people occupied, without the big price tag.

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## Ashley Hewson

Hi, my name is Ashley Hewson and I am running for the young mayor of Lewisham.

If I were to become the young mayor, I would promote the LGBT+ community because I strongly believe that no-one should hide who they are to please others. They deserve to be able to speak freely without being criticised or bullied. For years and years people have been punished for their sexuality and that needs to stop! Whether you are straight or part of the LGBT society, we all live in one world and we should all be treated the same, REGARDLESS!

- How would you feel if the tables were turned and you were put down for being straight?
- How would you feel if every day you were looked down upon for being yourself?
- How would you like it if you were dehumanised for expressing your emotions?

Day after day, week after week, this is what people go through. Now I want you to imagine if your life was like this and how you would feel about it.

These innocent people are aching for a change to be made and I can do that with your help if you vote for me, Ashley Hewson, on 16 October 2019.



## Lily Holmes

As a student facing GCSEs in a world where decisions that shape our future are made by politicians, I've experienced first hand the challenges faced by schoolchildren, and the critical importance of giving a voice to the youth of today.

As young mayor of Lewisham, I would create a summer game to get students out and around their borough. This Lewisham summer challenge would reach out to students in the area and build connections within the community. It would provide young people with opportunities to volunteer, run activities and gain valuable experiences. The game would enable Lewisham's youth to feel safe and take pride in their local area. I would hope to be able to offer prizes donated by local businesses to incentivise and encourage participation.

I would also develop an app/website which would support the game and, more generally, enable young people to exchange resources and information about Lewisham-based activities, e.g. drama, volunteering and mentoring. This forum would connect students across different Lewisham schools and empower them, allowing the youth to collectively share and discuss their views and ideas. I believe there's huge potential here and would be excited to have the opportunity to deliver!

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## Ashley Jones

If I am elected, I will try my best to talk to young people about how dangerous and illegal it is to carry a knife, even if it is for protection. Stabbings have increased by 20–30% since 2010 and our youth do not understand the consequences of carrying a knife.

Climate change is a serious topic affecting young people. Having bins that are brightly lit could help encourage young people to recycle and make it easier for those with bad eyesight to locate them.

Thirdly, there should be more adventure playgrounds. This would be good because young people would have a place to express themselves and talk about their problems at school or at home, or just to go and have fun.



## Femi Komolafe

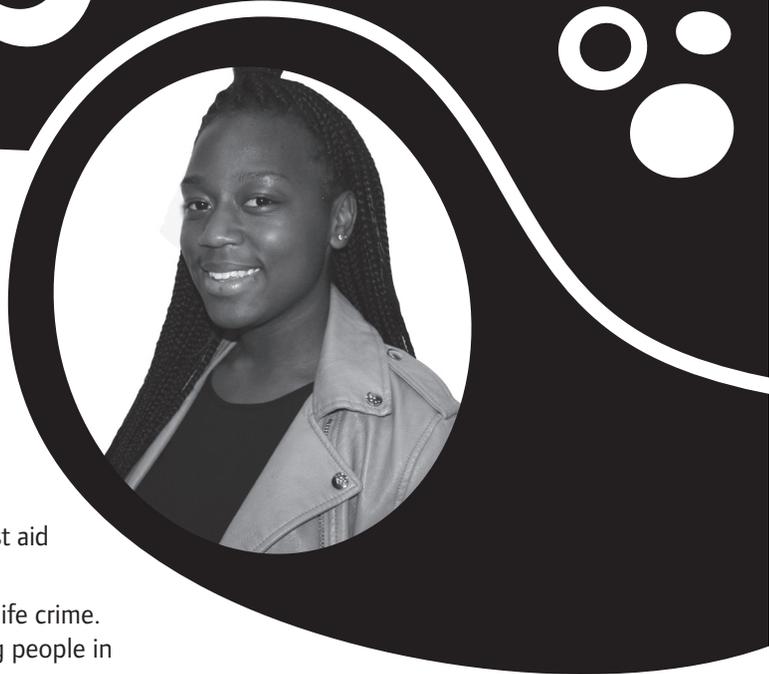
My faith is what has made me who I am, and as young mayor I want to reach out to the young people of this borough and share my faith with them without undermining other religions. I believe this will have personal as well as societal benefits.

I also understand that the young people of this borough have various unique gifts and talents with corridors of greatness through them, but no opportunity to showcase them to the wider community. As young mayor I want to provide those opportunities for young people to enjoy and practise their passion.

So vote for me, Femi Komolafe as your next young mayor and help me turn our youth of today into the leaders of tomorrow!

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## Shanique Lawrence



My name is Shanique Lawrence and I believe you should vote for me as your next young mayor because young people need a voice to represent them amongst the influential people within society and I am prepared to be that voice of reason and change. Three key issues I would like to tackle if I am elected are first aid training sessions, mental health and career opportunities.

Unfortunately, within Lewisham there are huge issues to do with knife crime. I plan to work with StreetDoctors and other charities to train young people in Lewisham in essential first aid.

My second point would be to improve careers guidance as I have seen the impact outstanding guidance has at my school. I would hope to set up a programme where schools can work together to ensure young people have access to careers advice and guidance.

Lastly, as young people we have a lot of pressure on us from our schools, and I intend to improve the support system to help us cope. I plan on creating a student body with schools, for young people to talk about the problems they are facing. I will also be promoting online services like Kooth, for students who are not comfortable talking to someone face to face.



## Amber Joanna Lecointe

Growing up in Lewisham has had its challenges. I'm not here to sell dreams or empty promises that I cannot fulfil, nor am I a miracle worker, but what I do know is that as the young people today we are here to make a change.

Anything is possible.

No mountain is too high, no sea is too wide for us to swim and climb to get our dreams! I believe we are created for a purpose. If I were to become young mayor I would really focus on employability.

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## Sebastian Nunes

If I were to be the lucky person to be elected young mayor of Lewisham I would do everything I could to improve life for young people. The first thing I would do is to make a gym entirely for children (there would be supervisors). The second thing I would do is engage the community in more teamwork exercises such as building a small cart or go-kart, exploring cultural cooking and raft building. Whoever builds the best cart, raft etc would be inducted into the hall of fame. The last thing, but certainly not the very least, is I would work to put in more environmentally friendly areas, such as planting more trees and green spaces, recycling, picking up litter and competitions in school as well as out of school. Every competition winner would win a prize and get inducted into the hall of fame.



## Ahmad Neamah

Hello young people of Lewisham, my name is Ahmad Neamah and I'm running for young mayor of Lewisham as I feel that young people's ideas and thoughts are not heard that often by adults. I will give you two things I would do if I was given the opportunity to be your next mayor.

Firstly, I would like to decrease the amount of air pollution in Lewisham as this has been a big issue for years. I would find different ways for transportation. Instead of driving we could persuade people and give them a greater incentive to use public transport and to start riding bikes.

Secondly, I would like to give assistance to people and families suffering from knife crime. I understand that as a community we can work together to assist people affected by this problem. I would open a facility to aid people and give the necessary resources like food, water, shelter etc. This would be a slow but steady, effective start to stopping knife crime.

I know this is no easy task but together we can achieve this. We are the future, so please vote for me, Ahmad Neamah, on 16 October. Thank you.

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## Aaliyah Odedina

Imagine living your life in silence. No one to talk to, no one to hear you, no one to go to. You find yourself slowly spiralling into a mental state of insecurity and anxiety. Unfortunately, this is the sad reality of our society.

Our community is quickly changing. It revolves too much around other people's opinions and trends. We hardly have time to think and act for ourselves. This is causing a massive decline in our mental health that no one seems to be talking about. Did you know that 75% of youths with a mental problem aren't receiving treatment? That's 75% too many.

As young mayor I would like to put in place anonymous helplines, as well as other essential resources for our mental health, so that youths no longer have to suffer in silence.



## Praise-God Onyeme

It is with great pleasure that I stand to contest for the 2019–20 young mayor of Lewisham position. As Greg Hiebert stated in one of his books, 'You can't give what you don't have'. This is a reflection of who I am and what I stand for, hence the reason why I have always worked hard and have no demerit points from Year 7 to date.

I am standing for this office due to the passion I have in promoting young people's activities and I see this position as an opportunity to bring out the best in every young person in the community.

If I am elected as the young mayor of Lewisham, I will address the following points:

- Health campaigns – talks on issues affecting young people such as depression, sexual health, refuse disposal and climate change will be organised to create awareness for young people in schools.
- Police and other law enforcement officers will go around schools to educate young people on dangers associated with knife crimes.
- Opinion boxes will be kept in schools for suggestions and act as feedback.

I believe I can deliver because I am honest and hardworking.

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## Abdullah Rahmani

I am Abdullah and I am standing to be young mayor of Lewisham as I am passionate about campaigning on issues that affect young people of Lewisham. Issues I am campaigning for are:

- Rising child poverty. One in three young people in Lewisham (34.27%) are currently facing poverty according to newsshopper.co.uk. Some students struggle with buying a uniform, which means that they face consequences at school and will be the odd one out, which affects their self-esteem and confidence.
- Holiday food hunger, which affects young people's mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. This means they struggle with learning at school.
- Mental health issues. According to a YoungMinds report, one in eight young people nationally suffer from mental health, which includes depression, anxiety and eating disorders, self-harm and suicide.

I will raise awareness by using resources such as social media platforms and partners to educate about these striking concerns.



## Marcus Reed

I could virtue signal about giving out free things or raising awareness about an alienating cause, but I'm sure you're tired of that by now. If you want the real issues to be tackled, I'm the one to look to.

You want your schools to be well funded. You want your streets to be safe. And ultimately you want to be heard.

You feel pushed aside by the mainstream culture that is prominent within our generation and seek representation.

To summarise, I have two basic aims:

1. Ensuring you have access to a diverse and enriching curriculum. GCSE courses are being scrapped, clubs are being cancelled and school resources are limited. I believe we can overcome this by increasing collaboration between schools and ensuring schools receive necessary support from the Council.
2. Promoting youth organisations to take kids off the streets. With this, we can help keep young adults out of trouble and into a more positive public light, one we are missing at the moment.

If I'm elected, I will also create a social media account to keep everyone updated and allow you to make enquiries. The silent majority is known. Vote for Marcus Reed on 16 October.

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## Luke Stevens

Luke Stevens: Liberating Lewisham

What's oppressing Lewisham's students?

1. Why are your revision guides so expensive? Do you feel your education is costing you?
  - I will work my hardest to get you top grades at the lowest prices.
2. Why is their right to pollute greater than your right to breathe?
  - I will do everything in my power to lower pollution and push for clean air.
3. Your education is your future; why do you have to pay?
  - Let's teach teachers how to teach us through constant, open feedback.

Vote for Luke, Vote for Liberation



## Dylan Suggars

My name is Dylan Suggars, and I stand for you! As a long-term member of the Lewisham community, I have developed a unique love and care for our area and the people that live here. That is why you should vote for me to be your next young mayor of Lewisham. If I am elected, I promise I will dedicate 100% of my time to making sure that I bring the young people of Lewisham together in unity and friendship. I will do this by organising large social and educational events to keep bringing the youth of Lewisham together. I will also fight for equality between teachers and their students, and give the youth of Lewisham a choice of what they learn to assist them in achieving their goals.

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## Lamar Swaby

I want to become young mayor for Lewisham because it will be a fantastic opportunity for me to express and share my ideas and opinions with the young people of Lewisham. I see this as a personal challenge to develop and improve my self-confidence and communication skills as I don't mind saying I'm nervous but excited about this too. I would be proud and honoured to serve the young people of Lewisham and would do everything in my power to ensure that their voices are heard, my vision becomes true, and facilities throughout the borough are improved. I look forward to communicating my ideas with my peers. As young mayor I would campaign to reduce knife crime as it is high on the agenda and a massive problem for young people – as seen on the news. My ideas include ensuring that all schools educate young students on the dangers of carrying knives and the reasons why some people might carry knives. I would also like schools to discuss with students more about the dangers of gangs, drugs and climate change, which are increasingly becoming a problem.



## Brandon Tembong

Stop knifing, start striving

What will I do?

### Knife crime

Workshops so people can understand the grim reality of knife crime and how it affects everyone.

Reaching out to people who are struggling with the lifestyle.

Working to find a solution based on what the young people have suggested.

### Opportunities

We need to give young people more of a curriculum for their lives instead of a curriculum of Shakespeare.

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## Shalani Thomas

If I were elected I would like to provide more creative events and opportunities. 'Why would I do this?' you may ask. I would do it because I know there are a lot of talented young people in Lewisham but they do not have the opportunity to show it. I would organise a talent show, gallery walk and creative writing clubs. Prices for these would be low and you would be able to show off your talent. As a kid growing up in Lewisham, I've seen for myself the potential in all young people, from the youngest to the oldest, and I believe that these young people should be able to show the whole borough their talent.



## Krystal Vu

My name is Krystal and I'm running to be young mayor. Even though I am only 13 I still believe that I can make many positive changes, such as more recycling facilities. I am passionate about helping the environment and want to see easily accessible recycling bins in schools and public places. I also want more opportunities and events available to young people, such as extracurricular activities and a wide range of work experiences.

I am open to suggestions and am looking forward to talking to other people in schools to help change Lewisham in a way that is good for everyone.

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## Amber Walker

The pressure and speed at which our lives move today is frightening. This counts equally for students, educators and parents. The challenges we face are numerous, diverse and highly stressful. A 'one-for-all' solution is not available, but what we can do is create a kinder and more productive society. What I plan to bring to you as young mayor is the creation of a mindfulness project, to be introduced into everyday school life across Lewisham. We need to cure our society, focused on the pressure of social media appearances and materialism, and concentrate on what really matters. We are capable, resourceful and most of all powerful. Mindfulness practice can help us to unlock the better qualities within us and achieve our goals. The project would include an introduction to mindfulness and meditation techniques, followed by a scheme of workshops aimed at improving our ability to focus, accept and then change our state of mind. The aim is to better control our reaction to the world and become calmer, happier and more purposeful. You may not be able to change immediately what is upsetting, distracting and stressing you. But you can change the way you are reacting to it. Vote for Amber Walker for a new and alternative approach to change.



## Notes

For more information about the work of the young mayor and the election process visit [www.lewisham.gov.uk/youngmayor](http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/youngmayor)

Election for the **YOUNG MAYOR** for LEWISHAM  
 On Wednesday 16 October, 2019  
 Vote **ONCE (X)** for your **FIRST CHOICE**  
 Vote **ONCE (X)** for your **SECOND CHOICE**  
**REMEMBER: You cannot vote for the same candidate twice**  
 You do not have to use your second choice vote,  
 however you must use your first choice vote or your vote will not be counted.

Candidates are listed in alphabetical order

	First Choice	Second Choice
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Ballot Paper Number: 12345

## Voting for the young mayor

- You can make two choices for young mayor.
- Vote for your first choice candidate by marking a cross (X) in the first choice column.
- Vote for your second choice candidate by marking a cross (X) in the second choice column.
- If you give the same candidate your first and second choice, only your first choice will be counted.
- You must use your first choice vote or your vote will not be counted. You do not have to vote for a second choice if you do not wish to.

### Are you 16 or over?

Remember if you are 16 years old you can register to vote online at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

When you turn 18 you will then be able to vote in local and national elections.

**If you would like a paper form or have any questions please contact:**

Electoral Services  
 Laurence House  
 Catford SE6 4RU  
 020 8314 6086  
 electoral.services@lewisham.gov.uk  
 www.lewisham.gov.uk

Don't forget to cast  
your vote for the next  
**Young  
Mayor**  
of Lewisham

**16  
October  
2019**

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election process visit

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