



# Charlotte Clark

Blaenau Gwent Youth Mayor 2019-2020

Member of UK Youth Parliament Member for Blaenau Gwent

**Young Person, passionate about change, passionate speaker, campaigner and advocate.**

Since joining Blaenau Gwent Youth Forum in 2018, Charlotte Clark of Llanilleth, has been committed to ensuring the voices of young people in Blaenau Gwent and Nationally across Wales are heard and influence decisions and change.

**“ Since being part of the Youth Forum, I have grown in confidence, met new friends and been involved in many projects and programmes that have supported positive change.**

Charlotte's term as Youth Mayor ended in November 2020. During Charlotte's time as Youth Mayor the global Covid-19 pandemic hit, leaving Charlotte having to adopt new ways of working within her important role as ambassador for young people and on behalf of Blaenau Gwent Council we want to congratulate and celebrate Charlotte's many achievements. Charlotte you are a credit to your parents, young people and yourself, well done!

## How I became the Blaenau Gwent Youth Mayor 2019

My journey began in year 6 when I was offered the opportunity to be a part of the **Children's Grand Council** which brings primary school representatives together to take part in fun activities to stimulate discussion around relevant topics. During this time, I wrote a poem which was chosen by the Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board to be presented at Parc Bryn Bach in the form of a plaque to launch Blaenau Gwent's local well-being plan 'The Blaenau Gwent We Want'. This was one of my first major accomplishments and during this time I was offered to join the Youth Forum.

After initially declining, due to my confidence, I accepted and joined which also coincided with the Youth Mayor elections, so throwing myself in at the deep end I decided to put myself forward, and to my astonishment I was voted in. I was now the **Deputy Youth Mayor!** I set my priority as Deputy Youth Mayor which was **Period Equity** as well as supporting the Youth Mayor with her priority which was LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer +) rights and worked alongside my friends at the Youth Forum whose chosen priority was mental health.

## Period Poverty

This priority allowed me to work with like-minded people to improve period facilities for everyone. This was something I was extremely passionate about as I believe that everyone should have access to the necessary sanitary products as we know lack of free basic hygiene items can:

- Interrupt education
- Interfere with social life
- Have a financial impact

I am pleased to say that Blaenau Gwent became one of the first areas to offer free sanitary products across the borough in schools and various community venues.

## Mental Health (with a focus on Positive Body Image)

2019 saw me become the Youth Mayor for Blaenau Gwent which was celebrated with an amazing inauguration at Cardiff City Hall's Council Chamber, followed by a visit to Winter Wonderland.

I set mental health as my priority for the year with a focus on **Positive Body Image**. Why? Because I recognise how someone's body image can have a dominant effect on their mental health. Although things during this year did not go according to plan due to the Covid-19 pandemic I still made this a focus within school, actively campaigned amongst peers and worked with the Youth Forum to produce information sheets alongside a campaign film which can be found here:- <https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/council/equalities-welsh-language/i-decide-me-positive-body-image-campaign/>



## Continuation of my journey

My journey as Youth Mayor did not stop there, being part of the Youth Forum allowed me to:

- Be part of important consultations around things like Mental Health, Policing, Wellbeing to ensure the voices of Children & Young People are continually heard.
- Be involved in National Campaigns such as International Women's Day.
- Be part of the Regional Youth Forum
- Attend a Full Council Meeting to talk about my journey and priorities
- Attend a meeting with Assembly Ministers around Digital Inclusion, and lastly
- Become a member of the UK Youth Parliament which led me to take forward an agreed motion for 'Better Mental Health Education for Pupils and Better Training for Staff', which allowed me to meet other young people across the UK.

But watch this space as my journey hasn't finished. I am still an active member of the Youth Forum and still represent Blaenau Gwent as the UK Youth Parliament member with this year's focus being **STOP PLASTIC POLLUTION!**



Youth Mayor Inauguration

