

Scottish Youth Parliament meets today

The Scottish Youth Parliament will host its 56th national sitting at the Edinburgh Training and Conference Venue when it convenes later today.

The Scottish Youth Parliament is the democratically elected voice of Scotland's young people. Nearly 160 Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs), who are elected every two years, meet three times a year at National Sittings to debate policy, select campaign priorities, and host events with stakeholders and other guests.

This weekend is the last national Sitting of the current Membership. Each Membership is elected for a two year term. Following the SYP Elections 2015, which took place earlier this month, the MSYP elects will form the new Membership of the Scottish Youth Parliament from June 2015.

In the evening the SYP Awards will take place. As a youth-led organisation, the SYP Awards is a hugely significant occasion which recognises the outstanding work that Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) and their Support Workers do to represent Scotland's young people. This event will provide an important opportunity to reflect on the legacy of the current Membership, and celebrate their commitment to ensuring young people are at the heart of shaping Scotland's future.

Speaking about the two-day event, the Chair of the Scottish Youth Parliament, Louise Cameron MSYP said:

“The Scottish Youth Parliament's National Sitting is a fantastic opportunity for elected young people from across Scotland to come together and debate the issues of importance to their constituents. This will be the last Sitting of the

current Membership, and I can confidently speak on behalf of the Membership when I say we have been on an extraordinary journey together over the past two years.

“It has been an honour to have represented Scotland’s young people as an MSYP. Since June 2013, SYP has held 6 national Sittings across the country, venturing as far as the Shetland Islands for our June 2015 AGM, and we’ve debated numerous issues that our constituents have told us are important to them, including zero hour contracts, work experience, among many others.

“We have campaigned on a range of issues of importance to Scotland’s young people, and helped foster a stronger, more inclusive Scotland by empowering young people to be truly involved in the decision-making process.

“One of my highlights as an MSYP has been witnessing the huge increase in the level of engagement of Scotland’s young people with politics. Around 80% of 16- and 17-year-olds registered to vote in the independence referendum, and knowing that SYP contributed to this legacy by engaging with over 18,500 young people and registered thousands of first time voters makes me extremely proud to have been an MSYP during this momentous occasion in our country’s history.

“I am particularly looking forward to the 2015 SYP Awards, and having the opportunity to celebrate the work of my fellow MSYPs, and their passion and commitment to ensuring the voices of Scotland’s young people continue to be heard and recognised by our country’s decision makers.”

Terri Smith, MSYP for Edinburgh Northern and Leith, will be welcoming her fellow MSYPs to her hometown for the Sitting this weekend. Terri said:

“It’s great to be holding the 56th Scottish Youth Parliament Sitting in Edinburgh, which I am proud to represent. Following

the recent SYP elections, I know my fellow MSYPs are looking forward to coming together for the final Sitting of our term and representing the voices of our constituents.

“SYP’s national elections were a huge occasion for Scotland’s young people, and I am delighted to have been re-elected as a Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament for Edinburgh Northern and Leith. While this Sitting will mark the final meeting of a Membership who have enjoyed two fantastic years filled with an array of historic achievements, I am looking forward to working with the future Members of SYP and helping drive real change.”