

# Press release: 'Champions of our democracy' announced at the National Democracy Week Awards

Today (Monday 2 July), winners of the first ever National Democracy Week Awards were announced at the People's History Museum in Manchester.

The awards ceremony has been held to mark the 90th anniversary of the 1928 Equal Franchise Act, which gave women equal voting rights and kicks off celebrations for National Democracy Week.

The awards recognise the exceptional work of individuals and organisations that work tirelessly to increase democratic engagement in the UK.

## **Six winners were awarded titles for the following categories:**

**Michael Bryan, Dan Lawes [Youth Politics](#) and Rachael Farrington [Voting Counts](#) jointly receive the Young Advocate of the Year:**

- This award is for a young person or group of young people aged between 11 and 25 years old who have taken a leadership role in promoting democratic engagement among their peers.
- Michael won for his work with Plan-International on the Learn Without Fear digital campaign, and his efforts to increase voter registration amongst students, in which he organised workshops at over 130 colleges, influencing thousands-of- students to register.
- Dan won for his role in founding Youth Politics in July 2017. Youth Politics equips young people with the skills needed to successfully implement social change by offering free training in debating, public speaking, campaigning, economics, politics journalism and policy-making, and aims to increase voter registration. The movement has reached over 14,000 people in Greater Manchester, with 470 young people attending a conference this year, which featured Mayor of Manchester Andy Burnham and journalist Michael Crick.
- Rachael designed and built the Voting Counts website, which outlines why voting is so important. Information on the site was produced without bias, allowing users to make their own informed decisions without being influenced by others. The website saw over 30,000 visitors on the day of the 2017 General Election alone, and continues to inform users about democracy.

## **Harris Bokhari OBE, Patchwork Foundation – Diversity Champion of the Year:**

- This award is for an individual or organisation that has increased diversity in our democratic process and electoral systems, supporting others to have their say.
- Harris founded the Patchwork Foundation, which has helped over 40,000 people from diverse communities engage in the democratic process through town-hall events and masterclasses with senior political figures and voting campaigns.

## **My Life My Say – Changemaker of the Year:**

- This award is for an individual or organisation that has put a new idea forward to increase access to democracy, convinced others of the merit of their idea and affected a real change that benefits the greater good.
- My Life My Say's democracy cafes have given the opportunity for young people across the country to participate in political discussion. The cafes equip young people with skills and experience, so they can give back to their own communities.

## **The People's History Museum – Collaboration of the Year:**

- This award is for individuals and/or organisations that have come together to reach a shared goal. Last year, the Museum delivered the Never Going Underground programme, working collaboratively with communities in telling their stories of the fight for LGBT+ Rights. Artists and activists, and LGBT+ organisations were invited to exhibit their own work to the public; bringing new ideas and histories into the museum. The museum engages with over 100,000 people each year, encouraging community engagement with the democratic process.

## **Minister for the Constitution, Chloe Smith said:**

The first ever National Democracy Awards are the ideal opportunity to celebrate the champions of our democracy across the country who have displayed pioneering efforts to increase democratic engagement.

The winners of all four awards, and those who were shortlisted, should be proud of what they've achieved to improve understanding of our democracy for thousands of young people.

# Ends

## Notes to editors

The criteria to be shortlisted for each of the awards can be found here:

- [Make your nomination for the Democracy Awards 2018](#)
- The Prime Minister answered a question at Prime Minister's Question Time on 6 June about National Democracy Week. [Read the full transcript here](#)
- National Democracy Week is running for the first time this week. Events will take place on a national and local level to encourage members of the public to get involved with our democracy, in particular those from under-registered groups, including young people, BAME groups, British ex-pats, and people with disabilities. [Events can be found here](#)
- The week will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Representation of the People Act 1918 when the first British women over 30 (who met a property qualification) won the right to vote and the 90th anniversary of the Equal Franchise Act 1928 which granted equal voting rights to men and women. The week is being delivered in collaboration with the National Democracy Week Council members, the Cabinet Office and partners across the country. [Council members can be found here](#)
- Follow us on social media at #talkdemocracy [You can find out more about National Democracy Week on the website](#)

For further information on National Democracy Week, contact the Cabinet Office Press Office on 0207 276 0436. It takes about 5 minutes to register to vote online. To find out more visit [Register to vote](#)