

The teenager running a council

theday.co.uk/the-teenager-running-a-council-4 29 June 2025



Young gun: George Finch, 18, (above) says he has not ruled out running for the job of council leader on a permanent basis. His track record, he says, is pretty good.

Is 18 too young to lead? Critics think that George Finch should be replaced, but the teenage councillor might revive local politics.

What's happening?

You have just turned 18. You can buy cigarettes, get married without your parents' permission and stand for election as an MP or councillor.

That is what George Finch decided to do. This May he was elected as a Reform councillor and appointed deputy to the leader of Warwickshire County. Now the council boss has quit, leaving George in charge.

A new leader will be chosen on 22 July. Meanwhile, George is getting on with the job, focusing on potholes and apprenticeship schemes.

Find out more

Last year, a 22-year-old named Sam Carling was elected Labour MP for North West Cambridgeshire. When campaigning, people were positive about his age, saying that politics needs more young people.

From the climate crisis to affordable housing, younger adults feel betrayed by older generations and their politics. **Millennial** and **Gen Z** leaders might

improve support for **democracy** and come up with creative solutions.

Leadership experts say that young people are still learning about their shortcomings and perhaps do not realise how much they don't know.

But leadership depends on the individual. A young person who already has courage and wisdom, for example, might be ready to take on great responsibility.

Is 18 too young to lead?

Some say

Yes! Young people lack the career experience to understand their own shortcomings. Putting them in charge of an organisation is at best risky and at worst irresponsible.

Others think

No! Young people in leadership positions can find new solutions to old problems and might even increase political engagement from other young people.

Six steps to discovery

Some people say

1. Connect

"In youth we learn; in age we understand."

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach (1830 – 1916),
Austrian writer

What do you think?

How do you feel about this story? - Do you think you would enjoy being in a leadership position? What about the role would suit you, and what would you find hard?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: What is the average age for a councillor in Britain? What is the average age for a member of Parliament, or a Prime Minister?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain about this story and one thing we cannot say for sure.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - Write an essay arguing whether the age of majority (the age when people are legally adults, currently 18 in the UK) should be changed, or whether it should stay the same.

5. Express

What do others believe? - In groups, come up with a list of the most important qualities for a leader. Then present your list to the rest of the class and vote on your top five leadership qualities.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Imagine that you are asked to run the local council on a temporary basis until a new leader could be found. Write a report about the experience, sharing what you learnt.

Glossary

Millennial - A person born between the early 1980s and the late 1990s.

Gen Z - Short for Generation Z, meaning people born in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Democracy - A system of government based on the idea of rule by the people.