

Impact Summary: Being a Boy Exhibition - House of Commons Reception and Dorset Tour 2026



Overview

Following national recognition of the Being a Boy project, the team was invited to present an original exhibition in the Upper Waiting Hall of the House of Commons from 2–6 March 2026. The exhibition featured artwork, photography, writing and performance pieces created by young men who participated in workshops between 2022 and 2025. Showcasing their achievements on a national platform, it shared their voices with MPs, Members of the House of Lords and policymakers. A reception was held on 3 March, highlighting the importance of championing young men's voices. Sponsored by Labour MP Jessica Toale, the event was attended by Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy, who gave an address at the reception speaking openly about how creativity helped shape his own identity. A former Being a Boy participant performed his poem from the Empower Creative Writing workshop. The event provided additional opportunities through Being a Boy for young men to celebrate and explore their perspectives on identity, masculinity and engage in meaningful conversations about the challenges they face today.

House of Commons Reception Attendees

To celebrate young men's voices, the event welcomed 10 former Being a Boy participants from cohorts spanning 2022–2025. The young men attended the reception with family members, teachers and supporters to celebrate their achievements. Several participants shared that it was their first time traveling by train and/or visit to London, highlighting the value of providing such opportunities for young people from underrepresented backgrounds.

The group received a bespoke tour of the Houses of Parliament from MP Jessica Toale, followed by a private viewing of the exhibition ahead of the reception. During the event, the young men spoke with MPs and guests, including Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy, about their experiences of the project and their perspectives on what it means to be a young man today.

“What an eye-opening experience for the boys and what wonderful rooms to open them to what could be. [My son] took great pride in meeting our Deputy Prime Minister, hearing his story and seeing someone who looks like his grandfather in such a position was a real moment for him!” - House of Commons Reception attendee and Parent of Being a Boy Participant

Further attendees included Labour Councillor George Farquhar, Deputy Mayor of Bournemouth, and Councillor Mark Howell, Mayor of Poole, as well as members of the Dorset Boys' Impact Steering Group and National Hubs, alongside a host of MPs, Lords, and dignitaries, with over 80 attendees at the evening reception.

"I am proud to sponsor the Being a Boy exhibition in Parliament and to champion the remarkable young men whose work is on display...Projects like this demonstrate the power of the arts to build confidence, strengthen identity and open up new pathways for boys..." - Jessica Toale, the Labour MP for Bournemouth West

You can read more about the House of Commons Reception here: [AUB Press Release](#)

Exhibition Tour



Following its success at the House of Commons, the Being a Boy exhibition attracted interest from a range of venues and organisations across Dorset, all keen to showcase the creative work and perspectives of the young men involved. Its inclusion in multiple events highlights the strength and recognition of their voices, extending the exhibition's reach beyond a national platform and into local communities. This growing demand demonstrates the exhibition's impact in elevating young men's stories, celebrating their identities, and ensuring their experiences remain central to conversations on masculinity. From seeing the exhibition at the House of Commons Tom Hayes MP for Bournemouth East invited the exhibition to be shown at his constituency office in Bournemouth.

"This exhibition is a statement of belonging, and I hope it will have an impact on people as they walk by. I work here in the office, sometimes quite late and I've seen young people looking in the window and looking at the exhibition, and I just think that's brilliant." - Tom Hayes, the Labour MP for Bournemouth East

You can read more about the Exhibition Tour here: [AUB Press Release](#)

Exhibition Tour Locations 2026

- **House of Commons**, Upper Waiting Hall, 2 - 5 March
- **Uplift Youth Festival**, Wimborne's Town of Culture, 8 - 19 April
- **AUB 2030+ Strategy Launch**, 29 April
- **BCP Council Star Awards**, 29 May
- **Tom Hayes MP Bournemouth East Constituency Office**, 2 June - 3 July
- **AUB Festival of Creativity and Being a Boy Celebration**, 5 July
- **St Marks Church Bournemouth**, 16 July - 4 September
- **Boys Impact Conference 2026**, Palace Court Theatre, 9 September
- **Poole Museum**, September - December

Learning and Next Steps

The exhibition at the House of Commons has further highlighted the impact of the Being a Boy project, showing the national and community desire to celebrate young men's voices and learn from their lived experiences. The exhibition showed what has been at the heart of the Being a Boy project from the beginning, that championing the creativity and voices of young men and listening to their stories is what can create real lasting impact. The Being a Boy project looks to expand its impact in 2027, championing and learning from the young men.