

Monthly Motivation: Sanmeet Kaur (class of 2013)



Since leaving Putney, Sanmeet has chaired events with Government Ministers and met not only the Prime Minister but the President as well!

What have you done since leaving Putney?

After leaving Putney High, I went on to study History at UCL - specialising in gender history. Having studied Government and Politics for my A-Levels at Putney, I also continued to explore different ways to get more involved with this including being accepted onto the Patchwork Masterclass Programme. It was here that I realised I wanted to work more closely with politics specifically.

So, how did you get more involved?

I joined the US Ambassador's Young Leaders Programme and was actually invited along to President Obama's Town Hall event in April 2016. It was surreal to meet him after having followed his career for so many years (including writing lots of essays on him during my time at Putney!).

You mentioned the Patchwork programme, what inspired you to join and how has it helped shape your career?

I got involved in the [Patchwork programme](#) because no matter what political space I entered it felt overwhelmingly white and hostile, and Patchwork was the complete opposite. Patchwork aims to get young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and people of colour into the corridors of power.

Joining the programme enabled me to get involved with lots of things I'd never done before - I chaired events with Government Ministers, met the Prime Minister and even gave a speech on the importance of diversity at Number 11 Downing Street!

Patchwork also gave me the opportunity to attend a Fawcett Society panel event, which led to me joining the Policy and Public Affairs team at Fawcett before taking on my current role as Cabinet Executive Officer at Lewisham Council.

If someone were looking at a similar career path, what would your top tips be?

I would recommend getting involved with your local political party to canvass or volunteer with charity in a policy role. Work experience with an MP or Lord is always super helpful too.

Whilst you were at the Fawcett Society, what did your role look like and did it prepare you for your current job?

My role at the [Fawcett Society](#) varied so much from writing speeches for MPs and Lords to writing reports on issues such as the lack of representation of women in public office. I also led on our two-year flagship programme looking at the pay and progression of women of colour.

The project looks at the intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantages mean in terms of the lived experiences of women of colour. My time at Fawcett prepared me well for my current role, which is working with the Mayor and Cabinet at Lewisham Council.

What have been some of the highlights, and what challenges have you encountered along the way?

One of the greatest highlights for me has been writing a speech for a female MP on the sexual harassment scandal in Westminster and watching her read my words, calling for urgent change to protect women.

It's been incredibly challenging to enter spaces where there aren't many people like me. Often I'm in rooms where I'm the only woman, and only person of colour. It's hard to get your voice heard.

How do you think your time at Putney has helped you?

Putney helped foster my love of politics and gave me the confidence to enter spaces and feel like my voice matters.