Listening to Young People

Friday 31st May
County Hall Durham
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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Durham Local Authority for providing the venue and associated support to host the event at County Hall. Thanks also go to Community Campus, Youth Voice (YIF) and Centrepoint Youth Educators for their involvement in the day.

A particular and huge thank you goes to all of the young people and the staff who supported them to attend but more significantly to take an active role in all discussions and activities. Young people really made the event successful. Thank you.
Introduction

The “Listening to Young People” event is the first themed event this year. The event consulted with young people on how services can increase participation in order for a guide to be presented on the afternoon. The event included an interactive programme of presentations, discussion and activities.

25 young people from across the region participated in the event, delivering presentations and activities and feeding in their views and ideas to discussions. Young people were supported by the regional champions and other member organisations.

The event sought to address the following aims:

1. Consult with young people about how they want to be involved
2. Produce a guide to involving young people
3. Share the “Listening to Young People” guide
4. Look at current practice – what can we improve

As well as providing an event summary, the main aim of the report is to provide feedback information from the event together with the actions identified by organisations taking part on the day. In addition to this report, a Youth participation Guide will be produced and will be circulated through the newsletter and available to download from the website.

Presentations and images from the day together with the report and the guide are available on our website: www.yhne.org.uk

Evaluation responses from the event were very well received. We have taken on board suggestions for changes in particular allowing more time for discussion and ensuring future events have even greater participation by young people. The “Listening to Young People” event was a very good start and introduction to youth participation and gives us a solid base to build on.
Background

The following information provides some background to youth participation; what it is, why it is needed, key principles, and drivers.

Youth participation is about young people having the opportunity to engage in decision-making that affects their lives, organisation and communities. It must be underpinned by democratic values and principles of non-discrimination and equality.

Youth Participation is when young people:

- Contribute to making decisions that impact on themselves,
- Give options and contributions are recognised, valued & acted upon
- Develop skills, knowledge and confidence to be involved in decision-making

Youth Participation is a right for young people. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, Article 12). Children’s Views must be considered and taken in to account in all matters affecting them, with consideration to age and understanding.

Positive for youth, a cross-government policy for young people aged 13 – 19 bring together policies from a range of government departments in to a single vision to help young people succeed. Providing a new and stronger emphasis on giving young people a voice in public policy and local services.

The National Council for Young Volunteers state 10 principles that underpin youth participation:

- Young people are involved because they want to be
- Young people have a choice about how they get involved
- The diversity of young people is valued
- Participation is accessible to all young people
- Everyone is honest and open about the process
- There is equal partnership between adults and young people
- Young people are encouraged to come up with their own ideas/solutions
- Barrier’s that stop young people from getting involved are challenged
- The value of young peoples work/ideas/skills are recognised
- Young people’s involvement makes a difference

There are many drivers to encourage youth participation. Young people gain a lot from participation such as Confidence, increased self-esteem, accreditation and recognition. Projects also gain from youth participation such as saving money, meeting legislative requirements and providing a better and more responsive service.
Programme

Morning

• Arrive and register, light refreshments will be available.
• Welcome & introduction
• What’s Important when accessing a service - Youth Voice (YIF)
• How to involve young people - Centrepoint Youth Educators
• 'What is good support – Community Campus
• Building the “Listening to Young Peoples” guide

Afternoon

• Arrive and register, light refreshments will be available.
• Welcome & introduction
• Principles of Participation – Kevin Franks, Regional Youth Work Unit
• Discussion Groups
• Youth Housing Charter
• Website and next steps for YHNE
• Closing comments
## Actions

**How will you use what you have learnt and the feedback from young people to inform your work?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Action identified</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Tyneside Council</td>
<td>Review current engagement practice and develop a new model/approach with young People involved</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stonham</td>
<td>Pass around information to team members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shaw Trust</td>
<td>Employability programmes to help young people prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandon Carrside Youth And Community Project</td>
<td>Active listening to young peoples needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Youth Work Unit</td>
<td>Be understanding, caring and listen, Get the job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonham Bucher Court</td>
<td>Volunteer Panels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endeavour Housing</td>
<td>Look to set up some peer support groups within my service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockton on Tees Borough Council</td>
<td>Include young people in decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunderland YMCA</td>
<td>Feedback to staff and advice on presentations, which provided brilliant information from service user’s point of views</td>
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Workers Evaluation

What did you find useful about today’s event?
Watching various presentations from various organisations
Young people’s input
From the Community Campus presentation listening to views and ideas on how to involve young people in services
Learning what young people thought was important from their workers and services
The icebreakers and videos
Very helpful to understand what YHNE do and the partners involved
Awareness of organisations supporting homelessness
Enjoyed the morning session and interaction of the young people present
Networking

What have you learnt from today?
Different services which provide support
The important of listening to young people to inform practice
Workers perceptions of Young People wants/needs is sometimes different
That I can still be a kid myself
Young people need this help and support
Different organisations and meeting people from different walks of life.
Homeless issues brought to my attention
Involving young people in the development and review of projects
Youth charter and Youth zone website

What would you change or add, to improve the event?
Very good event, perhaps more chance to network
Participation was good
I attended the full day. I found the afternoon quite repetitive of the morning.
I think the whole event could have been delivered in half a day
Introduction was duplicated in afternoon. Would have been better for the afternoon session to start earlier and gave introduction whilst the morning attendees had lunch.

Anything else?
Thank you
Fantastic session, very friendly staff. Natalie, girl who delivered the presentation, shared great interest in our service users and took time to wish them luck.
Shaw Trust has NEET courses running in the county. Please contact me for more information and to make referrals.
Background of young people were not via a care route. Would have been useful to find this area out of young people participation
Young People Evaluation

100% of young people said they felt their views were listened to.

“My Views were more than listened to” Paul Harland (Stonham)

100% of young people said they got the chance to share your opinions and idea’s

“We had more than one opportunity to share our ideas” Paul Harland (Stonham)

92% of young people said that what they had learned today was useful to them

“I learnt new icebreakers to take away and was able to express my opinions through post it notes. And that I am nervous about talking in front of a big group” Leoni Million (Centrepoint Youth Educators)

“It helps to guide us to correct support” Jordan Brown (YMCA)

“Useful drawing what kind of support worker we want” Dana Dixon (YMCA)

Any improvements or changes?

More games
Little more organisation and explaining (some things were just a little unclear in the tasks)
More fun and problem solving activities
More fun and snacks
Add air conditioning it was too warm. More challenges
More drawing work
Less post it notes more involvement and conversations with other young people
I think it went really well
No it was really run

Anything else?

Been fun and I liked getting involved 😊
Good experience and a good chance to be heard
I think it was a great opportunity to see inside the workers heads and get there opinions so we can see how they work
Make certain thinks more entertaining
I found the event quite enjoyable and fun
More young people should come along to the event.
Listening to Young People Guide

From various interactive activities and workshops, young people told us:

**Good support is:**
Being open and honest
Someone who is caring
Someone who is their to talk to who we can trust and that will listen to us and provide advice

**How to involve us:**
Peer-to-Peer support
Discussions during sessions
For worker to ask young people

**Qualities in a worker:**
Someone to have faith in us
Who is understanding to our complex needs
Someone approachable

**When accessing a service it is important that:**
There are the correct facilities – for children/babies
Accessibility – for all such as LBGT and parents
There is relevant and good information and advice we can access.
Further Feedback from the day

Young people also highlighted within the categories:

**Good support is:**

- Pushing us out our comfort zones
- Someone who is passionate and believes in you
- Teaching life skills and independent living skills
- Someone who likes and wants to help young people
- Individual to each young person needs

**How to involve us:**

- Discussions with workers
- Focus groups
- House meetings
- Good communication
- Being friendly

**Qualities in a worker:**

- Heart of gold
- Good sense of humour
- Eager to help
- Actually likes young people and will work with them not for them
- Caring
- A will do attitude
- No Favourites
- Hard working

**When accessing a service it is important that:**

- Taking in to account individual needs – Sexuality, Disability, Children
- Good information available
- Fun environment
- Childcare facilities

From the world café exercise workers highlighted various good practice and further improvements for the following three questions:

1. **How do you listen to young people?**

   - One to one basis
   - Involving young people
   - Honesty
   - No false promise
Giving feedback
Questionnaires and social networking (Facebook pages)
Staff recruitment – Interview panels
Group work

2. **How do you use what young people tell you to improve services?**

   Facebook and Twitter pages
   Newsletters
   Reviews with young people
   Making changes in the services such as updating house rules
   Suggestion boxes
   Young people on committee and boards

3. **What else is needed to make sure young peoples participation is meaningful**

   Trust and confidentiality
   Young people incentives
   Good facilitators
   Good feedback communication – in ways young people understand and can access
   Staff understanding the meaning of participation
   Motivating staff to change – making it the role of all staff not just the participation team
   Allowing young people to choose topics/sessions
   Making events and sessions fun