

8 actions to engage young people in Primary Care Networks

Introduction

Clinicians and commissioners from the children and young people's transformation programme within Healthy London Partnership wanted to understand how Primary Care Networks can work effectively for children and young people and how young people's voices can be included in the planning and development of their work. Healthy London Partnership commissioned the Association for Young People's Health (AYPH) to hear from young people about their views. The aim was to engage a diverse group of young people to understand what they would like Primary Care Networks to look like, how they could best meet young people's health and wellbeing needs and what would help young people to access support. This document highlights recommended actions from the project that AYPH implemented in order to run good and safe youth engagement. Here are quotes gathered from young people who took part in the project engagement.

"As a Muslim I really wanted to see a female doctor, but I didn't know I could ask for one, so I saw a male doctor and just lied about why I was there".

– young person, Healthwatch, Mile End Hospital

"I would trust my GP to share my medical information as they are the professionals, I just want them to ask me first"

– young person, Spotlight, Langdon Park

"I had no idea I could go to my GP when I was struggling with my mental health"

– young person, Step Forward, Bethnal Green Road

"Something as simple as an LGBTQI rainbow flag in a GP practices doorway is the difference between me feeling comfortable or not"

– young person, Step Forward, Bethnal Green Road

Recommended Actions

- 1. Identify which young people in your area you want to engage:** Understand the different groups of young people in your area and look at those you particularly want to engage. Taking a proportionate universal approach could mean prioritising groups particularly affected by health inequalities.
- 2. Identify young people's services who can support your engagement:** Identify services, organisations and charities in your local area and select groups to work with who can support you in engagement with their young people. To engage youth groups actively, make sure you have funding to cover their costs so that they can effectively support engagement with young people: this may include staff & volunteer costs, travel and subsistence costs (such as food or refreshments for the young people).
- 3. Ensure that your work shows best practice:** Work with a skilled youth worker to facilitate your engagement; staff working with young people should have an enhanced DBS check and work within safeguarding policies with clear lines of responsibility. Make sure these policies and responsibilities are communicated among your team and to the young people.
- 4. Define Primary Care Networks in a youth friendly way:** A clear definition of Primary Care Networks is essential for your team to work to. This sounds simple, however, definitions can be different depending on your sector or region. Equally important is a definition that is young person friendly and communicated well to participating young people.
- 5. Have a clear engagement plan:** Your engagement plan needs to be clear, flexible and deliverable to a small group of young people or a class full of them. Allow time for setting objectives and creating a safe atmosphere, remembering not all young people will know each other and may arrive at different times. Think about ice breakers and how to introduce the theme. Create a group agreement (or code of conduct) for the young people, professionals and youth workers to stick to, and be sure to explain your objectives at the beginning of the engagement.
- 6. Explain confidentiality and seek consent:** Explain to the young people how you plan to record and use the information you collect from them. Confidentiality and consent are key to the sense of safety in the group. Explain clearly any note taking, audio recording or observers that may be in the room.
- 7. Check back your results with young people:** Once the engagement has been written up, give the young people the opportunity to see it, so that they can give feedback about the engagement messages. This ensures you have not missed any points that are important to the young people, checks that they still consent to the messages and shows them that you have taken their input seriously. Some young people may be very interested in seeing your write-up, whereas some may not – either way it is important they have the option to reflect on their work.
- 8. Present your findings to others:** As well as presenting your write-up to the young people, it is also important to present it to other professionals and healthcare workers and gather their reflections. This allows you to gather peer insight and discuss your findings and can be recorded alongside the young people's views.

Contact us to find out more about this project or other aspects of AYPH's work

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