

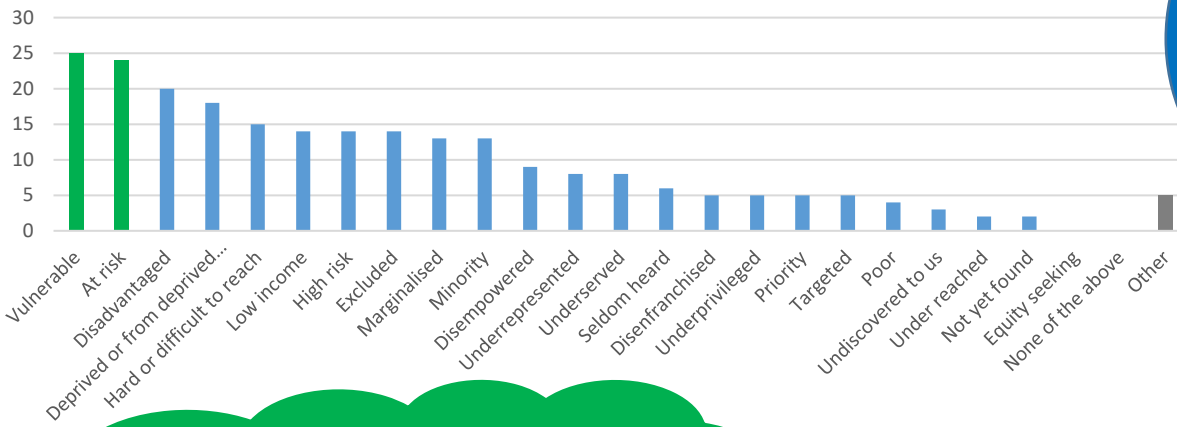
What is the issue?

There is no agreed language for describing important sub-groups of young people who are more likely to experience health inequalities. Language is not neutral but it is important that we get it right.

What did we do?

In 2021 we ran a survey of stakeholders & hosted an event to explore the topic of language relating to young people’s health inequalities. 63 stakeholders contributed to the research. We also spoke to our Youth Advisory Panel members to explore this theme.

Which of these terms do you use when describing groups of young people more likely to experience health inequalities?



75%
of professionals change the language they use depending on their context



Young people see “vulnerable” as “on the extreme end of the scale” or “for old people or people who are really sick”



Advice from young people

- “See me as more than my condition” and recognise the multiple aspects of my identity - this is more important as we progress through life transitions
- Be inclusive – speak to us in the same way as you would with adults
- Avoid using complex jargon
- Explain things clearly and use simpler terms for everyone, not just around young people
- Don’t look down on young people if they don’t understand
- Ask young people what terms they prefer
- Don’t be lazy, be specific and honest about what you’re talking about

Tips from professionals...

1. Avoid terms that make young people feel “different” from other young people
2. Think about grammar – e.g. “experiences of marginalisation” rather than “marginalised”
3. Language should be age / developmentally appropriate
4. Refer to good practice
5. Work with young people to co-produce terms

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