

NHS England: Working in partnership with people and communities

AYPH response

1. The ambitions of the guidance are that:
 - Health and care systems build positive and enduring relationships with communities to improve services, support outcomes for people
 - People have a greater say in how health and care services are run and the actions needed to reduce health inequalities
 - Communities can set the agenda for local change and for systems to create the conditions for power-sharing to occur

Do you think following the ambitions of the guidance will lead to better health outcomes?
(Yes, for all communities / Yes, for some communities / No / Not sure)

The current guidance does not outline how the voices and experiences of young people will be included in the ambitions to improve services and better health outcomes. It is essential that young people's views are heard within ICSs in order to identify the areas of priority for them, to improve their access to and experiences of health services, which will ultimately improve young people's health outcomes. Recognition and prioritisation of young people's health is beneficial for the wider population, as early intervention in this age group will prevent ill health later in life and support more effective use of health services.

2. **The guidance sets out the benefits of working with people and communities. Are there any other benefits that should be included?** (Yes / No / Don't know)

The guidance document should explicitly outline the benefits of working with children and young people. Examples that demonstrate the value and importance work with children and young people are important to support more effective engagement with this age group. Without explicit mention children and young people are often forgotten.

3. Below is a list of the 10 principles to working with people and communities. **Which 3 do you believe systems will need most support with?**
 - Ensure people and communities have an active role in decision-making and governance
 - Involve people and communities at every stage and feed back to them about how it has influenced activities and decisions
 - Understand your community's needs, experiences, ideas and aspirations for health and care, using engagement to find out if change is working
 - Build relationships based on trust, especially with marginalised groups and those affected by inequalities
 - Work with Healthwatch and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector as key partners
 - Provide clear and accessible public information
 - Use community-centred approaches that empower people and communities, making connections to what works already
 - Use co-production, insight and engagement methods so that people and communities can actively participate in health and care services

- Tackle system priorities and service reconfiguration in partnership with people and communities
- Learn from what works and build on the assets of all partners – networks, relationships and activity in local places
- I don't know / I'm unsure

Use community centred approaches that empower people and communities, making connections to what works already

There is a lot of existing information and evidence that young people have provided on the topic of improving healthcare and reducing health inequalities. A primary focus of ICS engagement strategies should be to consider what is already available, in order to avoid unnecessary repetition.

We support engagement approaches that empower people and communities as actively involved in the research and service change. It is important that young people are included as equal partners within communities and that their voice is heard and acted upon locally.

Involve people and communities at every stage and feed back to them about how it has influenced activities and decisions.

Young people we work with have told us about negative experiences they have had when they have been involved in research or engagement projects when they are not informed about the outcome of their involvement. It is important that young people are communicated with regularly about the changes that have been implemented as a result of sharing their experiences. It is also important to be realistic with young people at the outset of engagement projects in explaining the scope and viability of achieving change, particularly in relation to system-level change that may be complex and difficult.

Build relationships on trust, especially with marginalised groups and those affected by health inequalities.

Health inequalities are a major problem affecting young people aged 10-25 and reducing inequality cannot be achieved without hearing from those who are most affected. At AYPH, we are working collaboratively with young people from different groups to hear their experiences of health inequalities in order to consider appropriate solutions.

Young people who have experienced marginalisation often mistrust statutory services, which may be a reason for delaying access to healthcare in times of need. When planning engagement sessions with these groups of young people, it is important to be mindful of the time and resource implications needed to build trust with young people. It is worthwhile working with groups and organisations who support young people and who have already built trusting relationships (e.g. youth services and third sector organisations).

4. We want the guidance to clearly demonstrate and explain how health inequalities can be addressed through working with people and communities. **Do you think this has been achieved?** (Yes, for all communities / Yes, for some communities / No / Not sure)

The guidance does not explicitly reference children and young people. Health inequalities are embedded early in life and persist into adulthood. In order to effectively reduce health inequalities, there must be serious consideration given to actions and solutions that improve young people's

health. Young people's voices and experiences must be included in the guidance in order to share their views on actions needed to reduce health inequalities.

For more information on the importance of young people's health inequalities, please see our website below. At AYPH, we have a programme of work dedicated specifically to addressing young people's health inequalities. Through this work we have produced a conceptual framework with the causes, drivers and levers of diverging health outcomes, which is specific to young people. We have also collated data on the topic into a series of 40+ charts relating to young people's health inequalities.

<https://ayph.org.uk/ayphs-health-inequalities-programme-2/>

5. Do you have any further thoughts or comments on the guidance?

The guidance should include a separate section with information on how to involve and include children and young people in research and engagement activities. Children and young people are often forgotten and not incorporated into plans. The guidance currently highlights the importance of engaging with people from the inclusion health groups. We agree with this approach, though think that the guidance would be strengthened by also reflecting on the protected characteristics, of which age is one. The United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Article 24 states that all children and young people have the right to appropriate health services. The guidance should be updated to reflect on children and young people's right to health and recognise the value their experiences can bring in improving healthcare services.

There are specific considerations for this age group that need to be born in mind. Different approaches are required when working with young people and people need to be confident in engaging with young people in these ways, which may require specific training on the topic. There are a number of existing tools and resources for how to effectively listen and respond to young people's experiences when designing services. It may be particularly useful to consider the points raised by young people themselves relating to ethical involvement in research projects. Please see:

<https://ayph.org.uk/engaging-young-people-in-health-services-research-and-service-design/>

When working with young people to hear their experiences, safeguarding policies must be in place and adhered to. Currently the guidance does not provide information or advice on what good practice safeguarding looks like in the context of children and young people. This is important in protecting young people from harm and ensuring they are appropriately equipped to be part of the research or engagement process.

About AYPH

The Association for Young People's Health works to understand and meet the particular health and wellbeing needs of 10-25 year olds.

We want all young people to have the best possible health and equal access to high quality youth friendly services.

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