Promoting the Voice and Influence of Young People

Peta Halls
Development Officer
National Youth Agency

- **Our mission:** enabling youth workers to transform lives
- **Our focus:** NYA helps youth workers to transform the lives of young people in three ways:
  - By championing the distinctive role that youth workers can play
  - By enabling youth workers to do what they do, better
  - By helping to professionalise youth work.
Promoting the Voice and Influence of Young People

Children and young people have a right to be involved in the decisions that affect them; their participation is essential to improve services and respond to their needs, and the shared aim of their participation should be change.
Positive for Youth

- Government policy for 13-19 year olds
- Duty to involve young people in local democratic processes in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Commissioners must listen to and involve a diverse range of local young people in assessing needs and making decisions about local services
- Young people have a vital role to play at every stage of the commissioning process to inform health services for young people.
Positive for Youth (2011)

• Comments on the Young People’s Health and Wellbeing discussion paper highlighted the importance of focusing specifically on young people in health reforms
• Consultation confirmed young people want a say in their health services
• HealthWatch will provide one way of giving voice to young people’s needs.
Voice and Influence of Young People in Health

• National Children’s Bureau (2011) LINks involvement of children and young people


Hear by Right

• The NYA have developed ‘Hear by Right’ to help organisations to develop young people’s participation and engagement in services

• Hear by Right is a tried and tested participation standards framework to assess and improve policy and practice on the participation of children and young people and includes an award scheme.
Hear by Right

- Hear by Right is based on the established Seven Ss’ model of organisational change:

![Diagram showing the Seven Ss model]

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CLIC Sargent

• Engagement is at the core of cancer charity CLIC Sargent’s culture. Children and young people with cancer play an active role in its decision-making. Their views and experiences shape the organisation’s work, including services provided so that they get the support they need.

• Children and Young People’s Advisory Group consists of 28 children and young people aged 7-24 meets quarterly and is attended by senior managers and trustees.
University Hospital, Durham

- Need for child and young person-friendly environment within the Children’s Ward was identified. Young patients met on a regular basis to express their views and opinions about the development of the hospital, outcomes included:
  - Changes in the choice and quality of food and drinks.
  - The introduction of an appropriate complaints system
  - Chill-out space for older young people
  - “I think it’s changed, it’s much better. It is definitely a nicer place to be”.

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Salford Brook Advisory Centre

• Salford Brook Advisory Centre Sexual Health Service set up a young person’s management group to inform the developments of the service.
  – Monthly newsletter of provision for young people
  – Informal ‘drop in’ service provision after school
  – Peer counselling service
  – Increase in young males accessing the service
  – Young people’s confidentiality policy
  – “I think that our involvement has made the centre appear more young people friendly”
  – “I am part of the management group and feel that I do have a high level of control and that my opinion is always valued”.

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Voice and Influence of Young People in Commissioning

- Young people should be involved at every stage of the commissioning process which involves:
  - **Understanding** - clarifying local outcomes, needs, resources and priorities;
  - **Planning** – considering different ways in which the desired outcomes can be achieved effectively, efficiently, equitably, and in a sustained way;
  - **Doing** – implementing the plan using the resource available; and
  - **Reviewing** – monitoring delivery and its impact against expected outcomes.
Ways of Involving Young People in Commissioning

- **Assessing needs** – sharing life stories/experiences, workshops, conferences, voting, using photos/pictures, surveys and video making
- **Identifying resources and setting priorities** – using workshops, ranking/voting sessions, debates and focus groups
- **Planning** – looking at designs of buildings (inside and out), locations and opening hours
- **Procuring** – presentations, children and young people’s panels and ranking/voting exercises.
- **Monitoring** – mystery shopping, project advisory groups, surveys and blogs
- **Evaluation and learning** – for monitoring as well as case studies, life stories, photos, and video
Promoting the Voice and Influence of Young People

1. Trust young people
2. Avoid tokenism
3. Make clear young people’s roles
4. Their involvement should be as flexible as possible
5. Ensure young people understand the processes
6. Provide regular feedback to young people on their involvement
7. Process should be a fun and positive experience.

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Questions?