

Collaboration

Creating a positive and cooperative environment



Why is this area important?

- Young people need to feel safe, respected, connected and cared for if they are to share their voices.
- We need to work in partnership with young people – we both bring expertise.

We want a culture where everyone is comfortable to share – even though we may not all agree.”

**Young Person,
Co-production Group**

A collaborative environment

A positive and collaborative environment is essential for Youth Voice. It needs to promote the following values for everyone involved.



To create a positive environment that facilitates Youth Voice, consider:

Who

- Which adults have or can build positive relationships with the young people?
- How will young people interact with each other?
- Who else can provide support?

Where

- Where will young people feel at ease?
- Is it fully accessible to everyone?
- How do you organise the space so it is welcoming and comfortable?

When

- When will you be able to give it the time it deserves?
- When will the young people be available and most receptive?
- What length of time is realistic?

How

- What will you do to make it enjoyable?
- Which activities will you use to connect everyone?
- Which methods will give all young people a voice?

Above all, consider how you will **collaborate with** rather than control young people (see **Empowerment**).

Examples

The coach plays 'snowball' during sessions: the participants write ideas on paper, scrunch it up and have a snowball 'battle' in teams. It is fun, teambuilding and ideas can be shared anonymously.

The project development group takes part in a series of 15-minute lunchtime sessions, using a range of creative methods (e.g., barriers wall, wishing tree, postcards) to identify issues and ideas.

The PE advisory panel members take part in an outdoor and adventurous activity day at the start of the year to build connections and explore ways of working as a team.

Depth of Youth Voice

Practical steps

Our co-production group suggests:

- Agree a code of conduct that will create a positive environment for everyone.
- Create opportunities for everyone to get to know each other as well as focus on tasks.
- Use a variety of activities to maximise fun and engagement for all.
- Facilitate with creativity and flexibility so young people can contribute in different ways.
- Make space for all young people to have a voice (see **Communication**).
- Trust young people to take responsibility, e.g. take the lead, do tasks between sessions.
- Make use of young people's input and report back to them on how it is being used.
- Be clear and honest about the extent of young people's involvement, e.g. if something is not negotiable, explain what and why.
- Keep parents/carers of under 18s (and under 25s if vulnerable) fully informed.



Young People's Top Tips

1. For targeted sessions, allow us to bring a friend.
2. Learn and use our names. Make time for us to relearn each other's names every time.
3. Plan activities – but allow time for listening and going 'off-piste'!



Tools

(these suggest facilitation methods and activities)



Youth Voice Toolkit: Activate Our Voice (Youth Sport Trust) [Youth Voice Resources – Youth Sport Trust](#) Practical activities for initiating Youth Voice.



Youth Voice Ideas, Tips and Tools – a toolkit for gathering Youth Voice (Street Games) [Youth Voice Toolkit \(v2 –print\) \(streetgames.org\)](#) Practical activities and methods for consulting with young people.



Inclusion 2020 Youth Voice Toolkit – a toolkit for inclusive focus groups (Youth Sport Trust) [Inclusion 2020 Youth Voice Toolkit – Youth Sport Trust](#) Tips, ideas and examples for involving young people with additional needs (SEND).



Engaging Young People – activity cards (Energise Me) [Engaging-Young-People-Activity-Cards.pdf \(energiseme.org\)](#) Practical activities for engaging young people in Youth Voice.



Participation Young Spice – a toolkit for meaningful participation (Young Wales) [E young spice cover \(ioe.ac.uk\)](#) See part 3 for a toolbox of methods.



Young Voices in Sport – Young Voices Toolkit Activity Cards (Sport Ireland) [Layout 1 \(sportireland.ie\)](#) Activity cards for involving young people in decision-making activities.



AIM The Right Way – supports accessible, inclusive and meaningful participation (SYP) [AIM The Right Way – The Right Way](#) Checklists to support planning for youth participation in decision-making.