

## 2) Young people

The views of young people are very relevant. Over a quarter of the city's population are less than 20 years of age. Of these, 20 percent are still of school age. In Leeds, the [Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership](#) has created strong links with young people and they can share their expertise and knowledge. It is the key body within Leeds City Council that drives the engagement activities for the city's young people.

The partnership's [Leeds Charter for the participation of children and young people](#) sets out the key principles to which we should observe when consulting with young people ;

- have positive ATTITUDES towards all children and young people.
- be ACCESSIBLE to all children and young people.
- have the appropriate RESOURCES to support all children and young people.
- use INFORMATION will inform and involve all children and young people.
- have the SKILLS to enable young people's participation and will support all children and young people to develop SKILLS to participate.

When engaging with young people, draw upon the expertise of *Children's Involvement Advocates* in the five wedges and our staff who are closely involved with them through groups and forums such as the Youth Council, The Project and Reach Out and Re-connect [ROAR]. They will help to co-ordinate views and encourage young people to become involved - because just sending them out a survey, questionnaire or consultation to fill in may not be very stimulating or interesting. Details of staff who work with young people are in the contacts file at the end.

In a similar manner to reaching out to communities of adults that are not often heard, it is important to follow this principle when engaging with young people. Ensure that you include young people from all communities and backgrounds in your activity.

Effective engagement with young people can be achieved through:

- Involving children and young people in designing, creating and planning events and projects. They need to be part of the thought processes around suitable venues; timings and identifying the issues that young people most want to talk about and work on.
- Fun activities such as workshops, social events or creative activities are very productive. Similarly, using 'interactive technology' (such as the keypads seen on "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire") at an event can be interesting as it allows young people to see how research works.

**"Over a quarter of the city's population are less than 20 years of age"**

## Section 4 Who do I need to engage with?

- Ask young people how they would like their contribution to be recognised. This could be through reward vouchers or being involved in a launch or event and must be of value to their age group specifically.
- Consider how you could reward young people for their time and effort. Vouchers for the cinema, sports matches or high street stores are a good idea. You might want to hold a party or event to thank them for their time. They might like mobile phone top-ups.
- Value, listen and involve young people throughout every step that is carried out, especially when it comes to allocating budgets and setting timeframes, choosing venues or refreshments.
- It is helpful to target specific groups around needs/ability/age and to think about the levels of support that any individuals will require.
- Mobile phones, text messaging and interactive technology are particularly useful means for engaging with young people
- Carefully consider the style and wording of surveys, forms, information or documents and their design. Do you need young people to re-word them?
- Use fun and modern techniques to capture the imagination of children and young people. Arts can be a useful tool to help engagement with young people.
- Keep meetings or events short.
- Understand the community. Know how many young people there are, what service provision is in operation and what they are doing, where young people like to go.
- Dress appropriately - wearing a suit or formal clothes can be a barrier to engagement.
- Young people should not be out of pocket to attend. They may need to travel to attend a venue so allow for this when choosing a location.
- Parents and carers may need to be involved in activities as well.

And, most importantly...

- Make the activity **interesting** for young people !

For more information on how to 'reward' young people for their contribution to engagement activities, please refer to the **Policy and practice guideline on recognising young people's involvement** as developed by Children Leeds.