

Hampshire Local Offer – Engaging Young People in Improving Web Design

What was the participation project/activity?

Hampshire County Council received feedback that their Local Offer webpages were not inviting to young people. Officers approached a number of groups for additional views and opinions from children and young people with SEND, just to check that the views offered were representative.



Further feedback did indeed suggest that there was room for improvement with the webpages. A network of youth groups working with the target cohort was consulted, using example webpages created by an external company skilled in this work.

KIDS Young People's Engagement Group (YPEG) was one of these groups. Young people looked over page layouts and were able to write their own comments, ask others to put comments for them, draw pictures or symbols, add smiley stickers or sad stickers and also talk through their thoughts. As with many engagement projects, young people in this group have developed their insights so that they can offer not just their own views on matters they are consulted upon, but also consider the views of their wider peer group. Working with the web designers in the meeting, who were in turn skilled in listening to feedback and developing ideas from this, the groups were able to offer their input and respond directly to requests for clarifications and more detail.

A number of weeks after this consultation session the group were sent updated web pages. The design of the website was significantly altered following the consultation exercise. Members of the YPEG were able to see in the new layout where their input had made a direct impact. A number of young people in the group remembered the initial session and were both happy and surprised that their ideas had been listened to and they could see the changes.

'Look – they changed the colours. I love it'

'It's in English – we said they should make it English'

'I like the tabs. It's good isn't it?'

Young people took real ownership of the website and made clear their desire to continue supporting its development. Several young people have subsequently helped with content for the site.

Young people have been engaged throughout this process and it has given them a boost in confidence, empowered them and made them feel valued by their Local Authority.

'It was good because they listened to us'

'I saw the changes that we said to make'

'I made me feel included, important and valued'

'Information for young people by young people. We know what we want'

What learning does the case study offer?

In seeking out input from several groups of young people in the target cohort a wide range of views and experiences with the material were gathered, making the results of the process more robust.

Those undertaking the consultation reported that they believed they should have sought young people's input right at the start, when initially planning the Local Offer webpages. This process looked difficult and time consuming to them. The realisation that there were established groups for young people with SEN and disabilities in the area allowed them to more fully fulfil their consultation and design brief, utilising the experience and insights of professionals to do so.

Ensuring that those engaged in the face to face elements of consultation understand the communication needs of the consultees, and are able to adapt their questions to meet those needs, proved vital.



This resource is part of the Making Participation Work programme, a joint partnership between the Council for Disabled Children and KIDS, and funded by the Department for Education. For more information about the Making Participation Work programme, visit us at:

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/our-work/participation/practice/making-participation-work>



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