THE NHS YOUTH FORUM’S TOP TIPS TO INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN HEALTHCARE PLANNING
INTRODUCTION
Involving patients and the public in shaping NHS services is a vital part of how the NHS improves the quality of healthcare. The NHS Five Year Forward view (https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/futurenhs/) describes how important it is to have communities involved in designing better health services.

There are over 15 million people aged under 20 years in England, making up 25% of the population. Of these, 14% have a long-standing illness (Children and Young People’s Health Outcomes Forum report, 2015).

The NHS is increasingly embracing patient engagement and we must make every effort to make sure that children and young people are not left out.

Young people need to be involved at all levels of our healthcare system, from shaping the care they are receiving at the front line right up to co-designing and inputting to strategic change. This means that the NHS needs to think differently about working in partnership with young people. All too often we expect young people to get involved on our terms, but traditional engagement approaches don’t work for young people. Moving away from jargon-filled documents and meetings during school hours to more creative approaches can help us involve young people more effectively.

This document was developed by the NHS England Youth Forum. In it they highlight a number of practical top tips for commissioners and service providers to ensure young people are involved in healthcare planning and decision making and shaping higher quality care.

Further copies of this document can be downloaded from www.byg.org.uk/hsp/hfoptiprobrochure

Hand copies are available from england.engagement@nhs.net

A NOTE ABOUT SAFEGUARDING
Putting the right safeguarding arrangements in place when working with children and young people is very important. There are a range of approaches that can be used according to the type of engagement methods used.

If in doubt – seek advice.

1. STRATEGIC INPUT
– how to involve young people in decision making

Develop a young people’s board or steering/reference group or forum. This should be a forum that is directly involved in decision making but that meets at times convenient to young people, allows them to develop their own business priorities and ensures assurance and performance reports are fed back.

• NHS England has worked with young people and the British Youth Council to develop some guidance on setting up local youth forums: https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/how-to-guid-yth-forum.pdf

• The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) has developed a youth forum called ‘& Us’, a platform for children, young people, parents, carers and families to join together in improving child health, www.rcpch.ac.uk/improving-child-health/us-voice-children-young-people-an

• RCPCH has also developed a useful guide on children and young people’s participation. www.rcpch.ac.uk/what-we-do/children-and-young-people’s-participation/not-just-phase-guide-participation-children-and

1 2
CHECK IT OUT...
2. GO OUT AND LISTEN TO EXISTING GROUPS

Most local authorities have youth councils; they have youth mayors, members of youth parliament and local care leavers’ forums. Local colleges, schools and students’ unions have student representative groups – what are the priorities that these groups are looking at, how do they impact on health priorities? What views and comments can be gathered from these existing groups? Do they have reports that they can share? Why not hold an event with some local groups?

- Bristol Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) works closely with Young Healthwatch and other partners. A Young People’s Reference Group (YPRG) was set up to make sure young people are involved in decisions about the future of Children’s Community Health Services. The YPRG is run jointly in partnership by Bristol CCG and Healthwatch Bristol. As part of the project young people helped create a website, contribute to writing a consultation report and met commissioners on a visit to Bristol CCG’s Takeover Day. For more information see http://healthwatchbristol.co.uk/about-us/young-healthwatch/

- The Participation Works website has a wealth of useful resources to support those who want to engage and involve young people. www.participationworks.org.uk

- The British Youth Council supports a range of local youth networks. http://www.byc.org.uk/programmes/uk

CHECK IT OUT...

3. BE PROACTIVE AND REACH OUT

Who are the groups of young people who regularly get missed? How are the hidden voices of young offenders, homeless people, care leavers, traveller families, those with learning disabilities, complex health needs, and disabilities, and sensory impairment (this list isn’t exhaustive) being heard? Make sure that you include the views of those who experience some of the worst health outcomes.

- Young Epilepsy produced this video to highlight some of its participation work to make a difference. www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVL4Dg7dBHQ&feature=em-upload_owner

- Shropshire CCG has invested in developing a whole network of youth health champions.

- The Council for Disabled Children has a ‘Making Ourselves Heard’ network to ensure that young people with disabilities are listened to. www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/what-we-do/our-networks/making-ourselves-heard

CHECK IT OUT...
4. CO-PRODUCE, CONSULT AND ENGAGE

Ensure that any engagement planning, especially public consultation, specifically includes young people – children and young people represent 25% of the population, they are significant users of health services and part of the future workforce – it’s really important to engage this large community of stakeholders!

CHECK IT OUT...

- Brook has produced a toolkit to develop locally led ‘Takeover Days’. Developing events where NHS staff can listen to young people in environments and approaches that work for them is vital.

- The Young People’s Health Partnership has worked with commissioners and clinicians to produce a toolkit for General Practice as well as resources to support better engagement and services for young people.
  www.youngpeopleshealth.org.uk/our-work/young-peoples-participation/gp-champions

- MyAPT focuses on young people’s mental health and has produced a guide to participation with young people.
  www.myapt.org.uk/9-priorities/basic-guide-to-participation/

- My Health London is working with partners to work with lots of young people to explore improvement to young people’s health services.
  www.myhealth.london.nhs.uk/healthy-london/children-and-young-people

5. EMBRACE SOCIAL MEDIA

Communicate creatively! Can you say it in 140 characters? Is it plain English? Why does it matter to young people?

Remember, don’t just use social media to reach out to young people, also use it to research what young people are saying about healthcare issues. For example, with just 10 minutes of desktop research you can explore young people’s blogs, vlogs and YouTube films etc, gaining access to a wide range of young people’s views.

CHECK IT OUT...

- Sara and Amy from the NHS Youth Forum have given their views on mental health and taken two different approaches on social media:
  - Sara’s vlogs: https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=sara+levingston+youtube&qpvt=sara+levingston+youtube&view=-detail&mid=C2562080CEB7E7503914C2562080CEB7E7503914&FORM=VRDGAR
  - Amy worked with friends to produce an animation about young people’s mental health services.
    https://vimeo.com/138248901
  - Fixers.org works with young people to produce short films about issues that matter to them; unsurprisingly health issues feature frequently!
  https://fixers.org.uk/
6. APPOINT YOUTH AMBASSADORS/BOARD MEMBERS

Many organisations have youth board members. Youth ambassadors, like adult lay members, can bring valuable perspectives and challenge to board decision making. They should be transparently recruited, trained and supported in their role.

• East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust has produced ‘The Future is Membership’ to describe how it is creating a fresh approach to young people’s involvement and membership in the Trust.
  www.youtube.com/watch?v=982x-MpanzQ

• Ipswich and East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has developed a young people’s forum.
  www.ipswichandsuffolk folks.ccg.nhs.uk/YouthHealth/YouthForum.aspx

CHECK IT OUT…

7. TRAINING FOR COMMISSIONERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Train commissioners to work with young people and involve young people across the commissioning process, from service design, through to quality assurance and improvement. Hearing young people’s voices really works with dedicated investment and resource. Invest in some training to support their strategic input.

• Newham CCG and the University of East London have worked with partners to create and support a group of Youth Commissioners. In August 2015, the Youth Commissioners were asked to review service specifications for diabetes, from the Department of Health.

• MyAPT and NHS England worked with partners to produce a resource of 17 different case studies around using young people’s engagement to improve services.

CHECK IT OUT…
8. WORK WITH PARTNERS

There are loads of colleges, voluntary groups, youth clubs and organisations out there that have expertise in working with and listening to young people; don’t do it alone – work with some experts! Healthwatch is developing youth voice forums and approaches, some Clinical Senates have young people’s networks and voluntary sector organisations, such as MIND, often have young people’s forums. Other specialist young people’s organisations such as substance misuse charities and homelessness groups will help to reach seldom heard groups of young people.

- The STAMP project was set up by voluntary sector organisation Chilypep and works with young people to improve local mental health services. www.chilypep.org.uk/with-young-people/stamp-emotional-wellbeing/
- Youth Access is a national organisation providing young people with advice, guidance and counselling – they have a wide range of services, projects and networks of young people. www.youthaccess.org.uk

CHECK IT OUT...

9. DEVELOP THE FUTURE

Young people will be the service users, service providers and commissioners of the future. Ensure that you raise awareness of health jobs, careers, volunteering, work experience and internships.

Work experience, work shadowing and volunteering are great opportunities for young people. They give them a chance to build knowledge, skills and to work in partnership with individuals, schools and colleges.

- NHS Employers has some great resources and tips for setting up good work experience for young people. www.nhsemployers.org/neo/2015/05/dilemma-work-experience-toolkit-for-employers

CHECK IT OUT...
10. GET RECRUITMENT RIGHT

Involve young people in the recruitment of staff who will lead and commission children and young people’s services.

- NHS Employers has some useful toolkits and advice on involving young people in recruitment processes for NHS staff.

CHECK IT OUT...

11. HOLD MEETINGS AND EVENTS AT ACCESSIBLE TIMES & MAKE IT FUN!

It’s useful to consider twilight sessions after school, skype or online meetings, and events that take place during weekends or school holidays. Alternatively, take your meetings to young people. For example, hold your board meetings in schools, colleges, youth groups – invite people to take part in the proceedings so that young people can speak directly to board members.

- The NHS England Patient Online team used evening webinars to connect up with NHS England Youth Forum members all over the country to ask them their views on the Patient Online programme.
- NHS Citizen combines each of its face to face events with live, online twitter workshops so that everyone can participate even if they can’t get to the event.

CHECK IT OUT...
12. FEEDBACK

Don’t forget to let young people know how they have made a difference. Make sure young people get something out of engaging for example a letter or certificate of recognition.

CHECK IT OUT...

• Bristol CCG took its community health services consultation out to local schools and developed feedback reports that were accessible to young people. www.bristolccg.nhs.uk/media/medialibrary/2015/04/PRU.pdf
About the NHS England Youth Forum

The NHS England Youth forum are a group of 25 diverse young people from all over England. They meet throughout the year to work on their chosen priorities. The forum members are directly linked to thousands of other young people, through a wide range of networks, including very active twitter and facebook channels.

The purpose of the Youth Forum is to:

- Listen to young people's experiences and ideas for healthcare improvement
- Work with a diverse range of young people who can bring their perspectives and experiences of healthcare services
- Seek advice from young people about national programmes of work in the NHS

Information about the Youth Forum can be found on both the NHS England and British Youth Council's website:
http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/patients/yth-for/
http://www.byc.org.uk/uk/nhs-youth-forum

You can download a copy of this document here:
www.byc.org.uk/nhsyf/toptipsbrochure

You can download a copy of the Top Tips poster here:
www.byc.org.uk/nhsyf/toptipsposter/