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Changing the present, influencing the
future: Engaging young people in
community research

What is research?

Research is ...

- A journey of discovery.
- Helps us to answer questions, for example:
 - What are the issues that concern people locally?
 - How can we do things better?
 - Who can help us to improve things ?
- A process which involves ...
 - Looking at things in more depth and in new ways - re (again) and search (find).
 - Defining and redefining problems.
 - Collecting, organising and analysing data.
 - Reaching conclusions.



Important issues within the UK most commonly reported by adults, 2022 ...



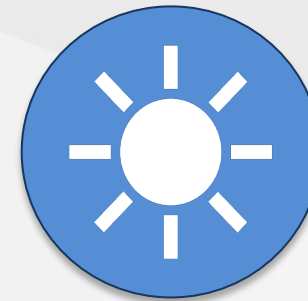
THE COST OF LIVING.



THE NHS.



THE ECONOMY.



CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 11 November 2022, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: 26 October to 6 November 2022](#)



Issues important to young people - Make Your Mark 2022



“ ... newly elected Members of Youth Parliament will be able to conduct localised research to better understand how an issue impacts upon the communities and people they stand to represent.”

(British Youth Council, 2022, p3)

Sources:

[The British Youth Council \(2022\)](#)

‘Make Your Mark Results Report 2022’.

[Hickman Dunne & Fischer \(2022\)](#)

‘Make Your Mark Results 2022 Technical Report’, The Centre for Youth Impact.



Table Discussion 1: 10 Minutes

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Why do research?

Why should young people be involved in this research?

Addressing these issues requires ...



Understanding of the causes of the problems

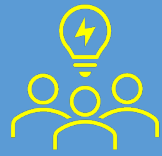


Identifying possible solutions



Engaging with others

Engaging with Others ... Dashboard of Considerations



Scope to influence decisions



Diagram illustrating the scope to influence decisions. It features a red warning triangle icon and a blue microscope icon. The diagram is divided into three columns: 'You', 'Priority', and 'Others'. A cyan arrow points from 'You' to 'Priority'. The 'Priority' column contains three horizontal bars (red, yellow, green). The 'Others' column contains a large blue question mark.

Diagram illustrating resources. It features a clock icon, two person icons with code symbols, and a green pound sterling symbol (£). The diagram is divided into three columns: 'You', 'Resources', and 'Others'. The 'Resources' column contains three horizontal bars (red, yellow, green). The 'You' and 'Others' columns contain large blue question marks.

Research aims and who the project is led by ...

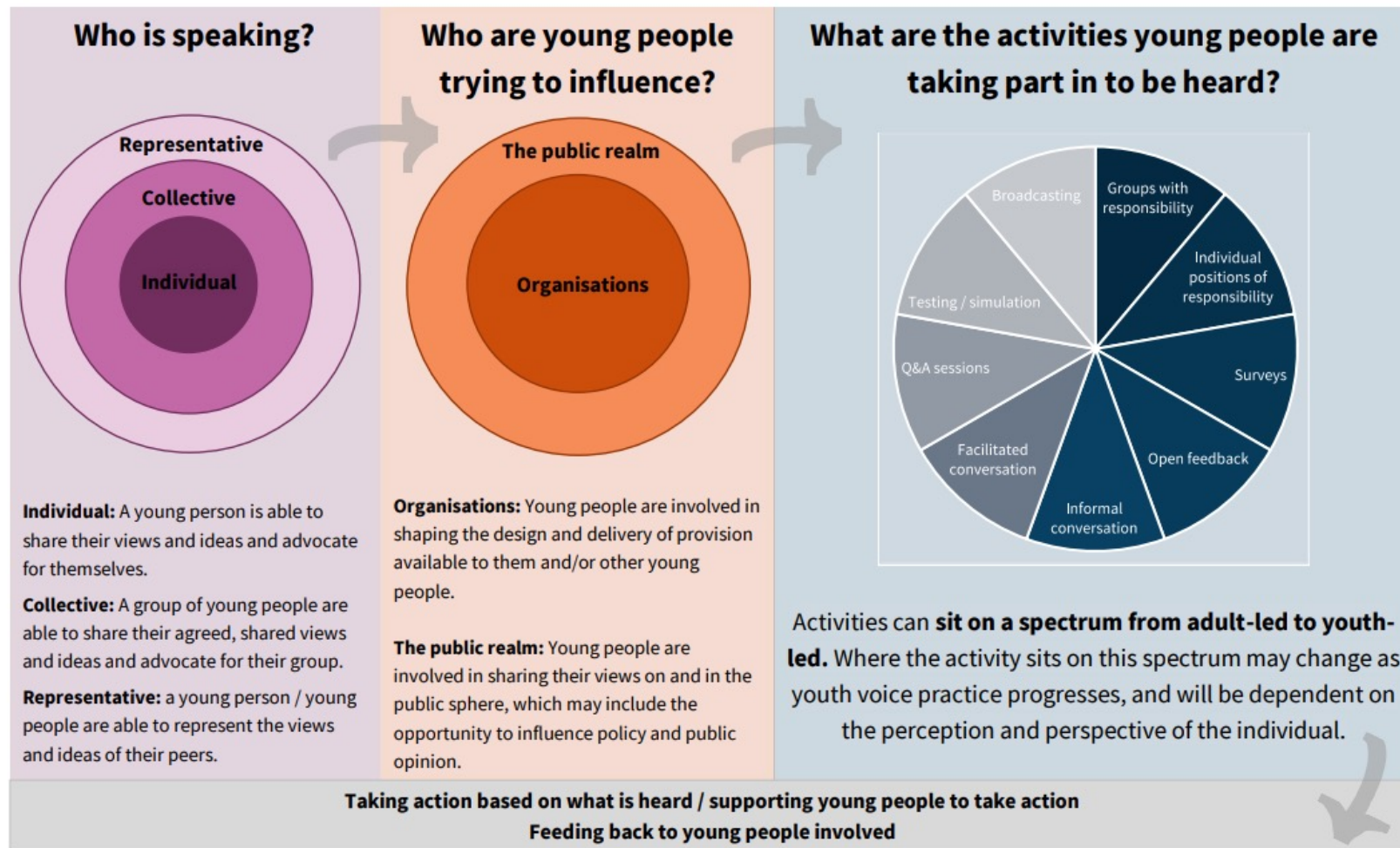
an individual /
community members

an organisation or
partnership

an engagement /
participation Forum

Shaping the future: the Centre for Youth Impact 2017-2022

2. Typology of youth voice practice



Source: [Hickman Dunne \(2022, p. 4\) 'Youth Voice: What exactly are we talking about?' The Centre for Youth Impact.](#)

Youth Voice Practice – Centre for Youth Impact

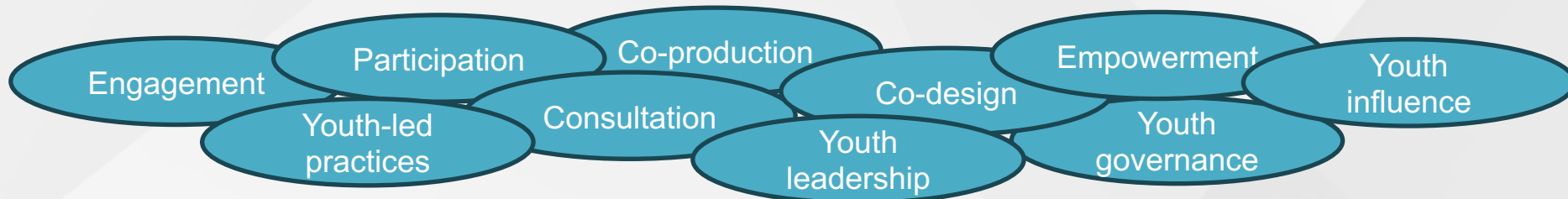
Providing support (i.e., the space, skills and time) for young people to express their views and ideas, and action being taken based on what they say.

This practice will result in positive change: in the situation, organisation or context that the young person is sharing their views about (e.g., the services they or others receive), in the young person’s personal development, or both.

Not just about voice:

“... the sector should be striving for ‘action-based’ youth voice ... ensuring that action is taken/impact is created based on young people’s views ...”

Other terms include:



Source: [Hickman Dunne \(2022, p. 3\) 'Youth Voice: What exactly are we talking about?' The Centre for Youth Impact.](#)

Changing the present towards influencing the future, examples



'A space with soul'. Need identified, no budget - fundraising required, children and young people were involved in the consultation process to transform the Royal Hospital for Children's theatre unit in Glasgow.

[Brooks. \(2024\)](#). 'A space with soul': children's ideas help transform Glasgow hospital unit'. January 3, 2024, The Guardian.



Manchester Young Researchers - Youth Homelessness Action Research Project. Information pamphlet for homeless young people and those at risk, and an awareness raising video.

[Manchester Young Researchers. \(2017\)](#). 'Youth Homelessness Research Initiative.'

[PARTISPACE](#) – Spaces and Styles of Participation Project, 2015-2018.

[Percy-Smith et al. \(2019\)](#). 'Action research with young people: possibilities and 'messy realities'. Journal of Childhood and Adolescence Research, p255-266.

[Dantata. \(2021\)](#). 'How we tackled the issue of Youth Homelessness in Manchester.'

Table Discussion 2: 10 Minutes

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What would meaningful engagement of young people in these processes look like?

How can this engagement happen?

Social Action Characteristics ...

High quality youth social action is:



Reflective

Recognising contributions as well as valuing critical reflection and learning



Challenging

Stretching and ambitious as well as enjoyable and enabling



Youth led

Led, owned and shaped by young people's needs, ideas and decision making



Socially impactful

Have a clear intended benefit to a community, cause or social problem



Progressive

Sustained, and providing links to other activities and opportunities



Embedded

Accessible to all, and well integrated into existing pathways to become a habit for life

Source: [Youth Social Action Toolkit website](#).



Concluding thoughts

- Research is concerned with finding solutions to issues and challenges.
- The issues that matter most will vary within and across communities.
- Young people have an important role to play in both identifying issues and possible responses to these issues in both the short and long term.
- The ongoing challenge is to find ways to ensure that young people's voices are heard **and have influence.**

“It is more complex and involved than what we thought at the start. We all reflected on what we had learnt about participation ... the importance of learning and process, focusing on a quality of relationships and interactions as central to participatory practice for young people as active citizens.”

Manchester Young Researchers
(2017, p. 4-5) 'Youth Homelessness
Research Initiative.'



Thank you for listening.

Any questions?

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