EYPiC

ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE IN CONSULTATIONS

A RESOURCE FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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Rees Jeffreys Road Fund

FTVG

What is consultation?

Local people given a voice

Consultation is any activity that gives local people a voice and an opportunity to influence important decisions.

Provide feedback

Members of the public provide feedback on a proposal that will later be considered by decision makers

Impact policy making and planning

Involving the public is important because planned changes could impact the community in which they live and work.

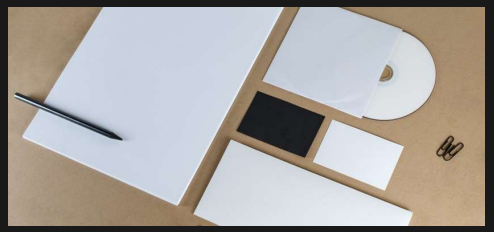
Build trust

Consultations can also help build trust and social cohesion between governments and the public, and ensure better use of resources.

Why should young people get involved in consultations?

improve service delivery, lead to the development of more appropriate provisions

improve personal and social confidence, and reduce feelings of discrimination



Develop skills and political literacy

Engaging young people (those aged 16-30) in public consultations is important because all young people should have the right to participate in matters affecting their lives both now and in the future.

WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE SAID

FOCUS GROUPS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Two focus groups were carried out in November 2022. The groups were conducted online via MS Teams and ten young people (aged 18-25) took part.

Topics of consultation

Few participants had taken part in a consultation. Of those that had, town and building planning and health were the topics that had been discussed.

> *'Essentially, they were trying to do was they got a bunch of students from the different campuses to talk about how each of those was lacking to ideally come up with this new campus where they would make up for all the areas in which the others were lacking.'*

Reasons for engagement

When asked about their motivations for taking part in a consultation, most stated that they had decided to do so because they were interested or felt strongly about the topic being discussed.

> 'The only reason I went is because I felt so strongly about it because I felt like somebody's at least gotta give them a piece of their mind.'

When we asked those young people that had not taken part in a consultation their reasons for not doing so, most stated that they felt disengaged from their local area, and therefore were *'not too fussed about what's going on'.*

Finding out about consultations

Some stated that they receive letters in the post *'saying they're building houses for example and the Council is interested to hear your views.'* Others mentioned that they find out via word of mouth from parents or family and friends. Whilst yet others still mentioned that they find out about upcoming consultations via local websites.

When asked how they would like to find out about consultations, letters, an online platform and social media were highlighted.

Methods of consultation

Participants mentioned that the option to be consulted via social media and/ or in person events was preferable.

> *'I also think that social media could be good. I'm looking at it for its convenience. The distance of getting to a consultation place might be a barrier. You gotta pay your transport.'*

> *''It is also better to be face to face because you can see the person's reaction, emotions, their facial expression and all that. Doing a discussion face to face also means that the people can really understand what you're saying.'*

Making an impact on decisions

Many participants felt that their voices were not being heard, mentioning that consultations are just done for show.

> *'It was kind of just something done for show, for optics to say ohh look we've done things and we've consulted a wide range of people but actually I don't think that was really the case.'*

> **'I pay tax and so I feel like I should have a right to sort of say what's going on, like how much of my money is kind of being spent.'**

WHAT EXPERTS SAID

INTERVIEWS WITH CONSULTATION EXPERTS

Four interviews were conducted with people who have conducted consultations. The interviews were conducted online via MS Teams between November 2022 and February 2023.

Topics of consultation

The experts we interviewed had consulted the public on a range of topics, including transport, town planning and health.

Reaching young people

Targeted approaches, either online or in person, were highlighted as being an important way of reaching young people.

> 'To identify young people to engage in consultations, we do stakeholder mapping on Google. We then work with institutions like sports groups, community groups, youth centres, school clubs, as well as local authorities and planning councils to engage young people. .'

> 'We encourage peer-2-peer discussions and use targeted approaches through marketing and website design. We also provide incentives and host specific face to face workshops. When deployed these approaches can be successful. '

Not a homogenous group

Participants all highlighted that young people are not a homogenous group and that needs to be considered.

> *'Historically we used a one size fits all approach to reach all young people. We shared posters, flyers, and information on a website. But we changed our approach... a one size fits all approach, doesn't fit all. '*

Methods of consultation

Participants mentioned that a one size fits all approach does not work. The method employed must suit the audience. But that digital and interactive approaches are preferred by many. Having a young person on boards can help with method selection.

> *'Making simple changes in format to infographics and visually interesting content seems to have garnered a lot more interest and excitement from young people.. '*

> *'We acknowledged that you need to be more flexible and agile. We moved to a more digitally focussed engagement approach with our formats and programmes. We used virtual consultation rooms, as well as software like figma, illustrator and adobe pro. . '*

Why engage young people?

The experts all argued that it is important to engage with young people.

> *'It is powerful to have younger people involved to discuss and mitigate the impact of applications. By involving them, you get authenticity and links to educational centres.'*

> *'Young voices are meant to be heard - they are the future. Getting their opinions is good for investors and anyone to understand what is needed for that future. Younger populations have a different type of experience..'*

Promoting engagement

There are no formal processes in place to support organisations to engage with young people, but it is important to ensure that a range of voices are heard, particularly for local authorities.

> *'Previously the consultations were conducted with whoever engaged. But there's now a greater requirement to engage with everyone. It is generally more difficult to engage with young and old people, so we have to explain to them why it's important to engage.. '*

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING CONSULTATIONS

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Engaging Young People in Consultations

Recommendations for local authorities

Partner with Youth Organisations

Collaboration can help to raise awareness of consultations and offers a safe space for young people to engage.

Provide Incentives

Incentives such as free food or prizes can encourage more young people to take part.

Use Social Media

Young people are active on social media. But consider which platforms will reach the groups you're targeting.

Make consultations accessible

The time of the consultation is an important consideration for young people who may work, study or have family commitments.

Offer online consultations

Online consultations provide an accessible way to engage for young people.

Consider location

Host consultations in locations where young people are already going. Schools, Universities and leisure centres are all good options.

Use Peer Facilitators

Some young people prefer sharing their opinions with their peers.

Interactive & Engaging Methods

Young people are more likely to engage if consultations are fun and interactive.

Use young person friendly language

Avoid jargon or technical language as it may be intimidating.

Follow Up and Provide Feedback

Young people are more likely to engage and then reengage if they feel like their opinions are valued.

HOW DO YOU THINK CONSULTATIONS COULD ENGAGE BETTER WITH YOUNG PEOPLE?

Contact us and let us know:
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