



Young consultants

Following on from our main Feature, these two linked activities are designed to involve young people in consultation.

1 Getting in focus

Aim

A way of identifying interests priorities from a larger group.

Resources

Flip chart paper and plenty of 'Post-it' notes!

Method

Divide the group into sub-groups of three or four and distribute flipchart paper.

Explain the general rules – that all ideas and contributions should be accepted and respected, and no contributor should be 'put down'. Give a time limit within which sub-groups should come up with as many ideas as possible. Give everyone Post-it stickers to write on.

Make sure everyone understands the question or task they are being asked to tackle, e.g. 'What information do we need to discover from our survey/consultation?'

Suggest that groups work as follows:

- Write the question in the middle of flipchart paper, with circles around it indicating what is: Essential/Useful/Desirable.
- Ask them all to write down at least two ideas or points in response to the question or task.
- Everyone places their Post-it's on their group's flipchart paper, sticking them into the relevant category, sharing their thinking as they do so.

Ask each sub- group to feed back their ideas – and the thinking behind them – to the whole group until you have a full group list of what is Essential/Useful/ Desirable. You can take the ideas to the next stage by using 'Questions, questions', right.

2 Questions, questions

Aim

To encourage young people to think about how to phrase questions. This activity can follow on from 'Getting in focus' above. [This example focuses on issues of youth homelessness and being a young carer, the process can be adapted to any topic.]

Resources

Download and print off copies of the 'Survey design' information on page 15 of this edition of the Source. Time allowance: 45-60 mins.

Method

Break off into four groups (two groups for Homelessness, two for Young Carers). Give groups the following brief and encourage them to use the 'Survey design' guidelines:

You are a research agency. You have been commissioned by a charity to find out about the lives of young people in the UK who don't get their voices heard. Specifically, the charity wants to know about two target groups:

- Homeless young people
- Young carers

Your task is to develop a short survey of up to 10 questions to find out the information above. Each group to prepare four copies of the questionnaire. (Allow half an hour in break out groups)

Groups can use their ideas from the 'Getting in focus' activity to identify the most important information they need. The 'Survey design' guidelines will help them to phrase and structure the questions.

After working on the brief, each group joins up with the other one working on the same theme. Group members pair off to interview each other, as a role play.

When pairs have finished, they join with the rest of their theme group and compare results. Did they get the information they wanted? Were interviewees able to answer the questions appropriately? Did they have to explain any of the questions? How could they have improved it?

Each group then spends 15 minutes reworking their questions.