

South East Sheffield Young People's Report 2009 Area Report on Young People's Participation

What we asked...

Young People...

took part in a focus group and were asked:

- Their understanding of participation
- What participation they do
- Barriers to their participation
- Solutions to overcome the barriers.

11 workers returned questionnaires & 3 focus groups were carried out.

Workers...

returned a questionnaire asking:

- Level of young people's participation in groups, organisations and communities
- Barriers to young people's participation
- Ideas/suggestions for training/toolkit.

What we found out...

When asked about their current and previous experiences of participation...

- 60% of young people had represented their peers to decision makers within their community
- 70% had the opportunity to discuss the things that affect them with adults in their community
- 70% had seen changes, the setting up of something or improvements in their area because of their involvement
- 40% *sometimes* felt listened to by people in their area.

Workers suggested young people have a **lot** of involvement in what the **group/project** does and **some** involvement in the decision making of the **organisation**.

However, young people only have **some** involvement in decision making that **affects their lives**.

Barriers

Young people suggested the barriers to their participation were:

1. Not having enough money (23%)
2. Not knowing how to get involved (19%)
3. Adults not listening, not having the skills or confidence (14% each).

Barriers

Workers suggested barriers to young people's (YP) participation to be...

Group	lack of confidence
	peer pressure
	image
Organisation	lack of time
	staff confidence in how to involve YP
	unrealistic expectations from YP about the organisation
Communities/Areas	use of YP only when it suits adults (tokenistic)
	not being YP friendly, e.g. language used
	lack of structure to involve YP

Solutions

The young people suggested the following as solutions to their barriers:

- Improve timing for better access,
- Learn to trust adults,
- Clearer information about participation.

Training

Most workers **did offer training** to young people, and **would** be interested in **attending training** to learn how to support young people's participation. The workers said they would be interested to learn **barriers to participation**, and to receive **tools and resources**.



This work has been carried out by the 13-19+ Participation strategy project (Chilypep) in partnership with Sheffield Futures and has been commissioned by Sheffield City Council on behalf of the Sheffield 0-19+ Partnership.

City Wide Results

Groups which invite Young People from across the city

Young People...

Focus groups (PTO) were also carried out with young people from these groups.

When asked about their current and previous experiences of participation...

- 63% of young people had represented their peers to decision makers within their community
- 61% had the opportunity to discuss the things that affect them with adults in their community
- 47% had seen changes, the setting up of something or improvements in their area because of their involvement.

Despite all of these positive results, only 18% of young people felt listened to by the people in the community.

Barriers

When young people were asked about barriers to their participation, the top three responses were:

1. Not enough money (20%)
2. Not having enough time (18%)
3. Adult's not listening (13%)

Solutions

Solutions the young people suggested were...

- training and building skills,
- funding and raising money,
- communicating with adults.

306 groups in Sheffield
45 City Wide
261 in different Community Assemblies

Workers...

Questionnaires were returned which asked the same questions as before (PTO).

Workers suggested that young people have a **lot** of involvement in what the **group/project** does, **some** influence upon the **organisation**, and **little** influence on decisions that **affect their lives**.

Barriers

Workers suggested the following as barriers to young people's participation...

Group	confidence and self-esteem
	peer pressure
	motivation
Organisation	worker/staff issues (e.g. lack of time)
	accessibility
	understanding of organisation
Community/Area	opportunities for participation
	adult perception of young people
	confidence/attitudes of young people



During October 2009, seven events were held across Sheffield where decision makers and anyone who worked with young people were invited to come along and find out about youth participation in their area, and discuss ways of involving young people more. The main themes that came out of each of the discussions were:

- Not enough money
- People don't know what's going on
- Need to say and show good things about young people.

Hopefully, these themes will be actioned soon!!

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