

Hear us.

A guide for young people

Having your voice heard to make a change



positive youth foundation
Beyond Engagement



Create it.
Shape it.
Embrace it.

YOUTH ASSEMBLY



WEST MIDLANDS
VIOLENCE
REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP

What is My Tomorrow?



My Tomorrow
Create it. Shape it. Embrace it.

My Tomorrow sheds light on the realities of being young today, aiming to challenge stereotypes and showcase the true diversity, strengths, and contributions of young people in the West Midlands.

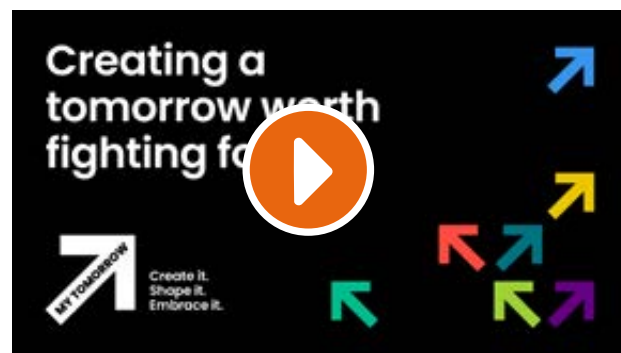
The campaign highlights the opportunities and challenges, often unseen, in young people's lives, sparking conversations between young people and communities to build understanding that leads to collaborative, positive action.

My Tomorrow's core objectives are to:

1. Empower young people to influence policies affecting their lives, ensuring their voices are heard and respected.
2. Support professionals in creating and managing opportunities for youth engagement.
3. Encourage communities to rethink perceptions and support opportunities for positive change.
4. Spark conversations that lead to collective action, shaping a future where every young person thrives.

My Tomorrow aims to be:

- Authentic
- Empowering
- Engaging
- Inclusive & diverse
- Thought-provoking





Why did we create this guide?

To support young people to feel confident and comfortable when taking part in conversations with professionals who lead services that affect young peoples lives.

Who is this for?

ALL YOUNG PEOPLE

It's time for young people to share their opinions, be heard and be listened to.

You have a right to be involved in conversations on topics that affect you and your future.

For more information, please visit:

positiveyouthfoundation.org

@pyfcoventry

@positiveyouthUK



Contents



- 05 "How to" Animation
- 06 What is Youth Consultation?
- 07 Why should professionals talk to young people?
- 08 What do you get out of it?
- 09 What will you be asked about?
- 10 Types of Consultation
- 11 What does a youth consultant look like?
- 12 Tips to Take Care of Yourself
- 13 Things to Remember
- 14 How to get involved



"How to" Animation



What is Youth Consultation?



Simply put, a consultation is a conversation with an end goal.

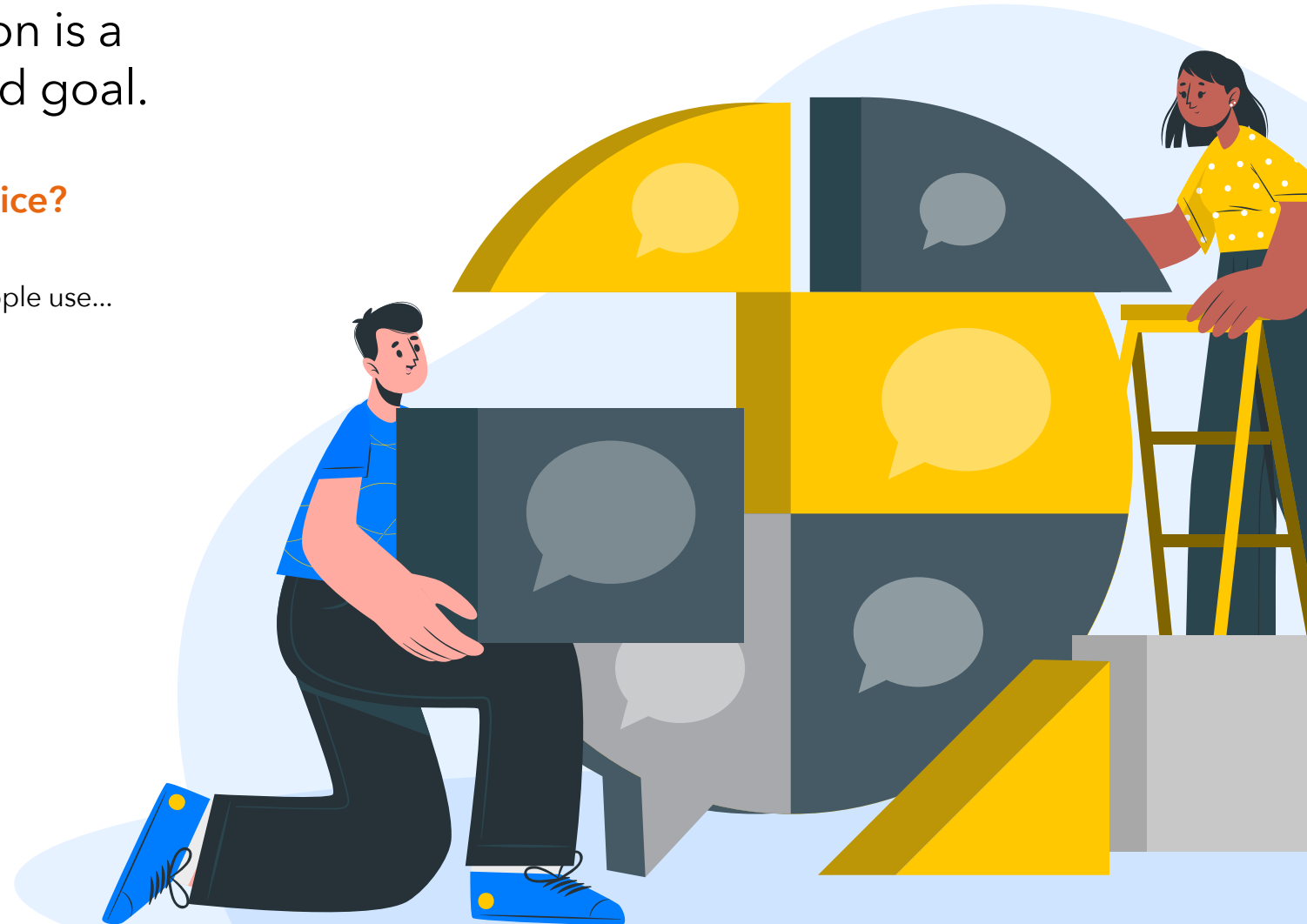
What do we mean by Youth Voice?

Capturing what young people are saying.
Don't worry about all the fancy words people use...

it's just a chat!

How is it collected?

- Listening and Responding
- Debates
- Podcasts
- Surveys
- Social Action Campaigning
- Creative Activities like Lyric Writing, Music Production



Why should professionals talk to young people?



What do they get out of it?

- Access to experts like you!
- Genuine insight into young peoples opinions, behaviours and ideas
- Designing services better suited to young people
- Learning how to talk and listen to young people in the right way
- Giving them new ideas and help with looking for funding for projects

Who?

Anyone that works with young people...

- Teachers, Tutors, Lecturers and Youth Workers
- Doctors, Nurses and Health Professionals
- Council Services like transport and housing
- Support Services like social care and domestic violence support

What do you get out of it?



- Getting your voice heard and opinions shared
- Creating change for the future
- Help to shape services better suited to you and your friends
- Boosting your confidence
- Meeting new people
- Experience for CV's & Personal Statements
- Hearing other peoples views that might be different from your own - challenging yourself and learning how to be open minded
- Developing your own communication skills and being comfortable to talk in front of others in a confident way
- Learning about new things
- Feeling like you are making a difference and helping people - being proud of yourself!
- You might even get incentives like vouchers, branded clothing to recognise your commitment



What will you be asked about?



Consultations can be about anything.

They are often specific to the job that the professionals do; for example someone who works for the NHS might run consultations around Health and someone who works for the Police might want to talk to you about Community Safety.

There may be times where the person running the consultation is part of a research company; this means they are being paid to find out more about a topic relating to you.

The people running the consultations should be able to give you more information on the topic or theme which will help you form your opinion.

If you don't know what the consultation is about, you should ask!

Often professionals want to find out ways to improve or make new services for young people, so your views and opinions are really important.



Types of Consultation



Focus Groups

Group discussion with other people. This can be face to face or online through video calls.

Surveys

An online or paper survey which asks multiple choice or open questions, they can also sometimes be anonymous.

Interviews

An interview with just you and one other professional to talk about a specific topic. This can be face to face or online through video calls.

Podcasts

The same as a group discussion, but recorded in the style of a podcast. This usually has set questions and a "presenter" who will steer the conversation into a structure that can be listened to and/or watched.

Debates

This usually starts from a statement about something that people have strong opinions about.

Debates are essentially a "formal argument" however they are formally structured with "For" and "Against" teams and even have points awarded for well considered arguments, but points taken away for being disrespectful!



What does a youth consultant look like...



Tips to Take Care of Yourself



Remember that you can say “No”.

If a topic makes you feel uncomfortable or you don't want to respond to a question, you always have a choice.

You should always be asked to complete a consent form.

Your words, photos, videos or voice recordings might be used in places that are public. For example on websites and in reports. If you do not want this to happen, make this clear to the professional you are talking to.

Choose your words wisely and keep a level head.

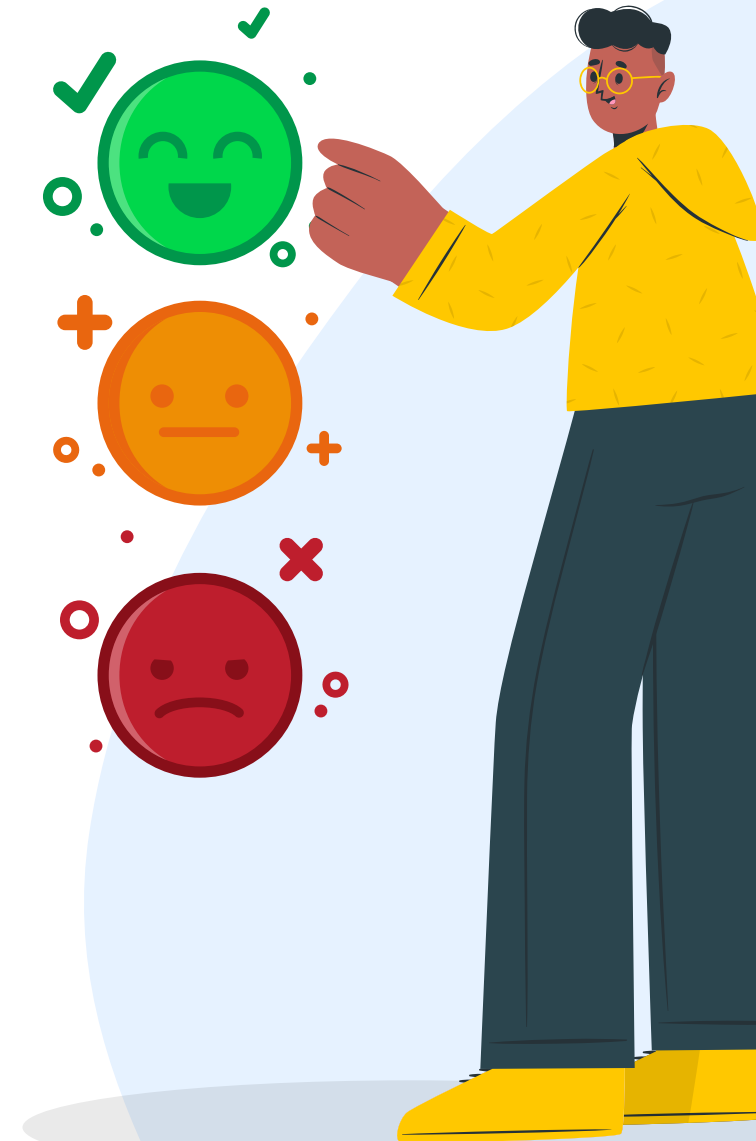
Sometimes what you say can be taken to mean something different, take time to decide how you want to have yourself heard. If you feel your words are being or have been changed, you have a right to ask for this to be put right.

Your time is valuable and your commitment should be recognised.

When you are getting involved in consultations or youth voice work, your time, effort and commitment should be recognised positively. This could be through a simple thank you or through offering an incentive such as vouchers or other support to access the session.

Open conversations can trigger different emotions, support is available if you feel you need it.

Some of the topics talked about during consultations may make you feel emotional or bring up something from the past that causes an unexpected reaction. For example discussions around mental health or domestic abuse. If this happens, there are support services especially designed for young people to reach out to. **Contact us if you want a chat.**



Things to Remember



- Not everyone will have the same opinion as you, and that is a good thing!
- Not all professionals are used to working with young people, be patient.
- You have a right to have your voice heard.
- You should feel comfortable holding people accountable and holding yourself accountable for your opinions.
- Your friends and other young people need you to speak up for them.
- You can have a real impact on affecting policy and services for other young people in the future.
- You are learning skills that are transferable into future education and careers.
- This could open doors for your future with meeting new people or finding out about services you didn't know of before.

It is what you make it!



How to get involved...



Visit our website **Positive Youth Foundation** to find out more and reach out for support.

Listen out for opportunities to take part in having your voice heard.

This might be through your school, college, university or youth services in your area.

Start your own conversation!

What matters to you?

Who do you need to approach?

Go for it!

