

Top tips to effectively co-produce with young people

1. Ask young people what they want to do and how they want to do it, this encourages co-design of sessions and participation.
2. Adapt to their needs, including ensuring your staff are knowledgeable and non-prejudicial. Young people will have different experiences and skills for the chosen activity so it needs to be adaptable to their needs.
3. Empower young people to take a leadership role, including in organisation and planning sessions as well as a session or activity leader role. Empowerment comes from trust, communication, feedback and confidence. Take pressure away from a power dynamic to allow young people to feel in charge, heard and like leaders.
4. When there is a meeting of minds between young people and facilitators there are opportunities for co-delivery that allow young people to develop skills in the activity and in group facilitation.
5. Collaborating with partner organisations is an asset to having strong youth voice, especially in the third sector, as different organisations have wider expertise and experience in youth advocacy and participation, including targeted work in underrepresented communities.
6. Explore new things with young people to give them new experiences, allowing for new opportunities as an incentive to participation.
7. Create, invent and pioneer groups with young people to tailor the project with their ideas at the forefront – and to support future funding investments in the direction the young people wish to go.
8. Be open to change direction if the young people plan projects with a different idea or need. Allow young people to test and try their ideas with each other.
9. Celebrate the small successes, whether a personal achievement of speaking up through shyness, leadership or within sports – communicate the positives with the young people.
10. Maintain a good feedback loop and communication to reflect on new skills, participation, behaviours, ambitions and improvements to promote an atmosphere, which grows in strength and plays to each other's strengths amongst the team.