

National Youth Reference Group Evaluation Report 2010

mwb consultancy ltd



INTRODUCTION

The National Youth Reference Group (NYRG) was established in 2007 with a remit to develop and promote the involvement of young people who had been homeless in the future delivery and shape of services across England.

The National Youth Reference Group (NYRG) is made up of young people aged 16-25, who have experienced homelessness. Managed by St Basils and funded through The Department for Communities and Local Government, the **NYRG** is available to Local Authorities and organisations working with young people to deliver;

- **Workshops**
- **Presentations**
- **Consultation**
- **Staff Training**
- **Sound Panels**

The **NYRG** objectives are to increase and strengthen young people's involvement in the development of strategy, policy, services and service delivery.

This evaluation of the **National Youth Reference Group** is designed to highlight what success the approach has had, the key learning from the project and to set out some areas for future consideration and development.

The key questions we are addressing are:

- Has the **NYRG** made a difference for the young people who have been directly involved?
- Has the **NYRG** made a difference to the way in which consultation and involvement are delivered in those organisations that have taken part in events etc where the **NYRG** has had an input?
- How has the **NYRG** delivered any difference to young people and organisations?
- What are the key learning points for those funding and running the **NYRG**?
- What are the key learning points for those with an interest in youth involvement in service design, evaluation and delivery?

To help us establish credible answers to the questions we undertook a rapid appraisal with young people who have been involved directly with the **NYRG**; we spoke to a number of participants at key events; interviewed the key people in St Basils who are involved in delivering the support to the **NYRG**; and reviewed a wealth of material both from the **NYRG** itself and from other organisations.

For more information on methodology see the relevant appendix.

HEADLINES AND SUMMARY

By sharing their personal stories, their passion for change and their own experiences of involvement the young people of the **NYRG** are helping local service planners and providers to make a difference for young people.

44 young people from across the 9 regions of England have been involved in delivering the **NYRG** menu of interventions.

The **NYRG** had contributed to over 50 events across all 9 regions of England.

INSPIRATIONAL AND PASSIONATE!

*'The **NYRG** helped us keep it very real and focus on the experience of young people...'*
Quote from a participant at a major event.

A substantial number of people who have attended workshops and events said that they had found the experience:

- **Uplifting**
- **Stimulating**
- **Challenging**
- **Inspirational**

Feedback and interviews suggest that a significant number of participants have gone away from events with the intention of creating change or doing something different in their day-to-day work.

- In Leicestershire young people from the **NYRG** have helped local commissioners to shape new specifications for youth homelessness services.
- In Northampton the **NYRG** input helped to kick start the setting up of a local young persons involvement group.
- In Camden the **NYRG** is working with senior staff to help shape the future direction of involvement for young people.

Life changing and affirming

The young people we have heard from who have been involved as members of the **NYRG** tell us:

- They have valued the opportunity to help create change for other young people
- They have relished the chance to share their passion for change
- They have welcomed the opportunity to encourage other young people to get involved and become agents for change
- They have valued the role played by St Basils as the host organisation and the open partnership approach developed by the team at St Basils

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Our analysis suggests that the **National Youth Reference Group** has made a significant difference in terms of promoting involvement of young people across a wide range of organisations and geographical areas and has been a positive experience for the young people who have been directly involved in delivering the input of the **NYRG** events etc.

The short answers to the questions posed above are:

Has the **NYRG** made a difference for the young people who have been directly involved?

YES, the **NYRG** has made a positive difference for the young people who have been directly involved in delivering its programme around the country.

The young people we spoke to consistently mentioned improved confidence, feeling that they had something to offer, developing new skills and learning about working with others.

“Young people have a unique perspective and its important it is taken seriously.” **NYRG** youth member

Has the **NYRG** made a difference to the way in which consultation and involvement are delivered in those organisations that have taken part in events etc where the **NYRG** has had an input?

YES, there is early evidence that a number of organisations have heard what the young people in the **NYRG** have to say and have then used that to promote and implement local involvement.

This varies from local groups being started, services actively engaging with young people to design new approaches and service pathways through to systematic reviews of the way young people get involved.

*“The session with the **NYRG** helped us to stay focused on the real issues for young people, it was really positive..”* quote from participant at an event where **NYRG** spoke.

How has the **NYRG** delivered any difference to young people and organisations?

For young people the key to keeping them involved and active in the **NYRG** are:

Starting from where the young person is

Allowing young people to set the pace and play to their own strengths

Offering consistent and very regular support and encouragement

Building confidence and skills

Investing time in nurturing the young person

For the agencies and authorities who have benefited from exposure to the **NYRG** they cite the professional way in which the support team at St Basils work with them to develop a programme, the professionalism of the young people who make presentations etc. Perhaps most importantly they cite the feeling that the approach offered by the **NYRG** support team and **NYRG** young members models ways of working that are proactive and exciting.

What are the key learning points for those funding and running the **NYRG**?

Providing support and a flexible approach to delivery is key to ensuring young people can maximise their input without coming under excessive stress.

The evidence suggests that this cannot be done on the cheap; as the membership of the group grows and changes there is a continual need for active support and development.

The link to local support networks and groups has proved essential in both engaging young people and in helping them to stay involved. In effect the **NYRG** is more than just the 44 young people involved and the support team in St Basils, it stretches out and connects with support organisations working across the whole of England.

The start point for the **NYRG's** work with the people running events or using their resources is to begin by identifying their unique local needs and then build a relevant programme from the **NYRG** menu of interventions. This has helped to ensure that the **NYRG** input stays relevant and fresh.

What are the key learning points for those with an interest in youth involvement in service design, evaluation and delivery?

Developing and nurturing involvement requires an active and sustained approach.

Involvement can bring great benefits in terms of relevance of service design and later take up.

Not everyone wants to contribute to the involvement process in the same way or at the same intensity.

There are no 'tricks' or short cuts to developing effective involvement.

Using the principles adopted by the **NYRG** at a local level is likely to deliver the best results.



CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Citizen empowerment is a major policy area for Government departments and the public sector services. This has led to the recent Community Empowerment White Paper, Communities in Control (2008), and the newly reinforced Duty to Involve, Consult and Inform. Research commissioned by the Tenants Services Authority in England in February 2010 identified the strong linkage between tenant satisfaction and the relationship tenants have with their landlord.

One of many responses at a central level to these policy drivers was to commission the development and support for a youth involvement project, the **National Youth Reference Group**.

The **NYRG** is a virtual youth consultative group made up of young people aged 16 to 25 from across England, who are or have experience of homelessness.

The group is funded by Communities and Local Government and managed/ facilitated by St Basils and has received funding to continue the project for a third year (2010/11).

In setting up the **NYRG** stakeholders acknowledged that engaging young people can be challenging and that 'traditional' models of engagement do not always deliver effective involvement or drive change.

The **NYRG** was established to facilitate work with young people and to create opportunities for them to respond to innovative approaches that draw on their ideas energy and creativity.

It was established to help provide opportunities for local organisations and partnerships to learn about the best ways of harnessing young people's contribution to creating change in services.

A key assumption underpinning the commissioning of the **NYRG** is that young people who have experience of services are able to contribute a unique perspective to support service effectiveness.

They are also able to challenge approaches which 'pathologise' homelessness and to become part of the solution and not just the problem.

To help set up the **NYRG** St Basils started by using their own experience of successful involvement developed through their Youth Advisory Board

The underpinning principles at the start of the **NYRG**:

- Make the process relevant and real for young people
- Give young people the opportunity to make a positive difference to the way the **NYRG** and other organisations operated
- Invest time in the young people's needs so their involvement is sustainable beyond the first flush of enthusiasm

- Constantly and openly recognise the unique perspectives of young people
- Make it easy and enjoyable for young people to contribute and commit themselves
- Make the young people involved feel they are being taken seriously

It is important to note that when the St Basils team started work on the **NYRG** they did not have a solution 'one they had made earlier' tucked up their sleeves but they did draw on their experience of running a very successful Youth Advisory Board. This board is a key part of St Basil's governance structure and process.

The evidence suggests that they used the principles above as a start point for a co-production approach with young people and allowed the process, products etc to flow from that.



MORE DETAILED FINDINGS AND COMMENTS

HOW IS THE NYRG ORGANISED AND RUN?

Based on the material we have seen, the web site, interviews with key staff and the feedback from both young people and participants at events we have come to the conclusion that the **NYRG** is what might be best described as a 'Ronseal' project.

'It does exactly what it says on the tin.'

Our analysis is that the way in which the **NYRG** is run and organised sets a good example of how to get the best from young people's involvement and demonstrates or models some excellent practice.

The key principles for work with young people

Our evaluation has been able to identify that the following key principles are at the heart of the **NYRG** operation.

Our assessment is that these are not complicated or esoteric principles but their apparent simplicity belies the fact that they are very hard to put into practice.

- Being flexible about how young people contribute
- Taking what young people say seriously
- Being honest about what can and can't be done
- Providing support and encouragement for **NYRG** members
- Being prepared to try out new ideas and learn from them
- Treating young people with dignity and respect and responding to their energy and commitment positively
- Value and promote the diversity of young people
- Promote fair access to all young people

There are now 44 active youth members of the **NYRG**. (April 2010). The evidence suggests that young people stay involved for at least a year and many have been involved from the very early stages of the project.

We saw evidence that these principles guide the work of the team in the way it runs and organises the quarterly training and support sessions for young people involved in the **NYRG**.

It is mirrored in the way young people are enabled to take on tasks, events etc and to set their own level for the intensity of their involvement. For example being flexible enough to allow young people to opt in and out of intense activity depending on their personal circumstances and needs.

The **NYRG** style of working includes subtle approaches to help young people set and manage their own boundaries and commitments. So that the young person does not feel cornered into doing things they feel unable to cope with whilst at the same time promoting opportunities for them to challenge themselves.

Lastly it features a very proactive approach to acknowledging success and input so that young people are given feedback and reminders of feedback on a regular basis. This feedback is done on the train after events, in conversations and via text messages.

Initially the young people were encouraged to keep a log of their activity and feedback but this ran the risk of becoming too much like 'homework' so the team moved to a more flexible approach.

This regular text flow and discourse helps the young people to remember that they can make a difference and to build their confidence.

All of the above are based on investing time and energy in getting to know the young person in the round, helping the young person to assess their own strengths and weaknesses and by making them feel valued.

As we note this is backed up by a very active programme of communication between the **NYRG** team and the young people in the virtual network.

Our assessment is that this alignment of principles and practice is an important element in the group's success.

The approach taken by the **NYRG** team at St Basils towards their external relationships with potential clients e.g. those local organisations and authorities wanting help with involvement is also an important part of their success.

There have now been over 50 events at which the **NYRG** team of young people have taken part. (April 2010).

Through interviews with participants, event organisers and with the **NYRG** team we are able to identify the following as key factors in the relationship between the **NYRG** and its 'clients'.

- There is not a one size fits all approach
- The menu of options on offer from the NYRG leaves room for flexibility

- The **NYRG** organisers take the time to understand the needs of event organisers and their organisations

The approach adopted by the **NYRG** team is based on developing a good understanding of the clients' needs and aspirations. This is done through discussion about the outcomes the client wants to achieve.

By establishing the barriers and drivers for change in the local environment and then using the menu of options available to the **NYRG** the team are able to put together the options that meet the needs of the client in the most effective way.

There are clearly limitations like time, cash and time pressures to take into account but we were struck by how the **NYRG** team attempts to be as client focused as possible. They appear to be able to resist the temptation to trot out the same old presentations or push particular menu items.

For example the **NYRG** put considerable time into developing a 'drama' product that no one has used yet, it might have been tempting to suggest this option just to get it used but they have not done so.

Clients of the **NYRG** talked about the very professional approach adopted by the team and we think this has been crucial in creating situations where they are maximising the energy of the young people and helping clients to maximise their return.

The **NYRG** does not charge for its activities with clients and this was noted as being helpful in encouraging people to think about making contact with the **NYRG**.

A number of clients of the **NYRG** we spoke to did say that they would have paid for the input but equally a significant number noted the lack of charge as a big plus factor.

Our assessment is that if the NYRG had to charge for their involvement that there would be a drop off in requests for support and that in the next few years of budgetary constraint this would be a potential risk to the group's success. The evidence from previous periods of restraint is that these sorts of activities are very vulnerable to cuts in budgets.

The internal organisation of the NYRG and its approach to clients is robust and flexible and we suggest that it provides an excellent model of how to involve and engage young people.

Geographical coverage of the group

The **NYRG** has been able to make links with and get young representatives from all the regions of England involved in their work.

Events have been held or contributed to in all regions of England and there have been cross border forays into Scotland.

As we note earlier to provide effective support to the young people this has meant that the **NYRG** support team have had to develop strong links with local support providers and local involvement groups.

Our analysis suggests that there is potentially a very effective network of people and organisations emerging that link together through the **NYRG**. There is a real opportunity for this to be developed further.



WHAT DIFFERENCE IS THE NYRG MAKING?

Young people's experiences

We spoke to 12 young people who have been directly involved in the **NYRG**. Some of them have been involved from the very start of the project and some had been involved for a shorter period of time.

The young people we spoke to had a wide variety of experiences and backgrounds; some had been actively involved in local involvement before they joined the **NYRG** network for others the **NYRG** was their first experience of youth involvement.

The range of young people involved reflects the demographics of the wider population of young people using homelessness services and as such provides a good cross representation of young people.

Despite the variety of experiences, geography etc the young people we spoke to all shared one thing in common **a desire to make a difference for other young people.**

The responses from young people highlighted the following.

The approach used by the support team at St Basils is regarded by all the young people we spoke to as being very effective and makes them feel supported and valued.

For the young people who had been involved in youth advisory boards and other structures before getting involved in the **NYRG** the transition to a bigger stage had been both exciting and challenging. They relished the opportunity to make a difference on a bigger scale.

For young people who were getting involved for the first time the **NYRG** offered them the chance to develop new skills and to grow in confidence at a pace that suited them and in the company of more experienced peers.

Young people said that they had developed skills etc in the following areas:

- **Confidence in speaking to big groups of people**
- **Confidence in working with others in a team**
- **Knowing when to deal with issues and when to let them rest**
- **Confidence in making their point without becoming cross**
- **Becoming more diplomatic**
- **Developing mentoring and other interpersonal skills**
- **Becoming more aware of how other people view them**
- **Feeling motivated and proud**
- **Feeling that they belonged to something big and valued**

A number of the young people we spoke to mentioned that they thought these skills were highly relevant to their future work and career chances.

Some young people have used the experience of the **NYRG** to help them get on to courses, start work focused training etc.

The impression we were left with following the interviews was of a highly motivated and committed group of young people who had been enabled to turn their previous life experiences, some of them quite challenging, into a springboard for themselves and for other young people.

We noted a high-level of 'other centeredness', put more bluntly the young people were often less concerned with their own development than they were in the difference they had helped to create for others.

The young people we spoke to all recalled incidents or discussions at events that lead them to believe they were making a difference for other young people.

The young people had taken part in a wide variety of and style of events and all had their personal favourites, some liked the big presentations others the smaller group work sessions, all of them valued the opportunity to take part and all said that they felt able to focus on the things they liked doing best.

All the young people valued and enjoyed the training sessions offered as part of the **NYRG** support package. They felt that their views and ideas were taken seriously in all the things the **NYRG** does, from how presentations are done through to the way in which support is offered.

A number of young people really valued the chance to meet with other young people from across England and felt their horizons had been broadened by listening to and understanding other people's stories.

One young person put it like this, *"at the training and events it feels like we are working together and for each other, it's a great feeling..."*

There was a resounding 'thumbs up' for the way in which the **NYRG** team at St Basils supported the young people, how they kept them informed and made them feel like important people.

As one young person put it *"Tamzin (NYRG worker) is great at staying in contact and keeping us on track with loads of text messages just to say 'how are you', 'well done today.' It all makes me feel like they care."*

Why are young people getting involved?

As we note earlier the big reasons appear to be the young person's desire to make a difference, the personal gains are a bonus as far they are concerned.

“I got involved to make a difference for other young people, to remind staff why they are doing their job...”

“I want to remind staff working with young people to be passionate about the young people they work with...”

“I like to challenge people’s perceptions of young people and remind them we are important.”

“All young people have potential and I think the NYRG can help to remind people out there about that...it just takes one member of staff to see the potential for a persons life to change.”

“NYRG is about getting people to reflect and to then create change...its important to put some passion back into work with young people.”

“Young people have a unique perspective and its important it is taken seriously.”

There are now 44 active youth members of the **NYRG**. (April 2010). The evidence suggests that young people stay involved for at least a year and many have been involved from the very early stages of the project.

Our assessment is that evidence above supports our earlier assertion that the **NYRG** is making a difference for the young people who get involved and in fact we might go as far as to suggest that for some of the young people it is a life changing experience.

Participants and stakeholders experiences

We spoke to a broad range of people who had organised and taken part in events and workshops. Through direct interview and by reviewing feedback sheets from events we were able to get the views of over 200 participants at events of various kinds.

We analysed feedback from people who had attended or organised events where the **NYRG** had made an input. In their evaluation of the events as a whole, 75% of respondents drew specific attention to the impact of the **NYRG’s** work with very positive feedback. There were no negative comments about the **NYRG’s** input at events, workshops or other sessions.

A significant number talked about how the **NYRG** helped to ‘keep it real’ and focused on the key issues for young people.

Others mentioned how the input from the group had helped them to feel confident about taking forward their own plans for involvement at a local level.

The **NYRG** has been involved in some very in depth work at a local level, for example in Leicester working with strategy and commissioning teams to help develop new pathways and approaches to youth homelessness services.

Those areas that have experienced this more in depth involvement reported that the **NYRG** had been an invaluable resource both helping them to think through issues and design concepts and helping to engage local young people in the processes.

Some of the participants at the bigger events recounted how hearing the young people speak and share their stories had helped them to reflect on their own practice.

We interviewed a small number of stakeholders, for example representatives from the department of Communities and Local Government (CLG). The view from the stakeholders we spoke to was that the **NYRG** had been a force for positive change and had helped to demonstrate that youth involvement was a practical and powerful way of driving change.

Overall the view from participants and stakeholders is very positive.

This is reflected across the range of events or input on offer from the **NYRG**.

For a full list of the opportunities on offer from the **NYRG** we suggest visiting their web site at www.nationalyouthreferencegroup.co.uk

The flow of requests for the **NYRG** to become involved in events has increased over its life span and much of this appears to be down to participants at events wanting to get the **NYRG** to come again or to take part in new developments.

The big question is ‘what actual difference has it made?’

What difference has it made?

It is still relatively early days for the **NYRG** but there is already some evidence that the group’s input has influenced changes in policy and practice.

The potential impact of this influence will only be fully realised if these changes are sustained into the medium term but the evidence so far is very positive.

Here are just a few examples of practical outcomes and outputs which can be directly attributed to the involvement of the **NYRG**.

Leicester City Council worked with the **NYRG** over a period of time using their expertise and insights to help carry out a review of services for young people who are homeless or at risk of

homelessness. The work included in depth workshops and review activity with the **NYRG**. In particular the **NYRG** offered their insights into the experience of using services and acted as a group of 'critical friends' in terms of asking searching questions about pathway design and other issues. As a result the team from the City Council used the material they had developed with the **NYRG** to help develop a robust pathway for young people, to develop a set of service specifications and key considerations for the procurement process.

The team in Leicester are keen to involve the **NYRG** and other local young people in the process of procurement and evaluation of the eventual contracts.

In Northampton the input from the **NYRG** helped to stimulate the development of a local involvement group 'Young Voices' that is now up and running. The local group has used the **NYRG** as a model for involvement. They also used the **NYRG** input to kick-start the 'In my shoes' programme which features the Youth Voices group in delivering a prevention programme with information and a narrative about youth homelessness which is being delivered in schools across the area.

The organiser in the Northampton example noted that the **NYRG** had been an 'inspiration to both professionals and young people'.

A rural authority with a good track record on youth homelessness prevention worked with the **NYRG** on a session aimed at stimulating interest and insight into the young person's journey into homelessness with a focus on helping elected members and other stakeholders to develop a better understanding of the pressures and challenges that vulnerable young people face.

Following **NYRG** input at an event with Homeless Link in the West Midlands, where a number of service providers attended to discuss improving service user involvement, staff from two projects were moved to take the ideas back to their organisations and are now implementing changes in the way they tackle youth involvement. One of these organisations is now in discussion with the **NYRG** about follow up work.

As we note above these are just a few examples of the reported impact of the **NYRG**, we think they demonstrate the range of input and the variety of outcomes that can be achieved.

For further information and case studies we suggest you visit the NYRG web site at

www.nationalyouthreferencegroup.co.uk

CONCLUSIONS

Our analysis suggests that the **National Youth Reference Group** has made a positive contribution to promoting and invigorating the involvement of young people who have been homeless in key areas such as service design, evaluation and policy development.

It is still early days but a platform for a national network of young people able to support and stimulate involvement is now in place through the work of the **NYRG**.

There are some very exciting possibilities beginning to emerge from the work done to date e.g. the use of web based resources.

Our assessment is that the **NYRG** is very well organised and uses a set of principles for involving young people that are both highly effective and highly transferable.

The approach taken by the team supporting the **NYRG** is one that could be used across the country.

The alignment of the principles of involvement set out above with the practice of the team has, in our opinion, enabled the young people directly involved to develop personally. It has also demonstrated that involvement is doable.

The success of the **NYRG** with individual young people, for example the number of young people involved, the length of time young people stay involved and their personal growth appears to be a product of the principles we talk about and also a considerable amount of low level support, encouragement and communication on offer from the **NYRG** team.

The success in terms of numbers of events held or attended, new business and changes on the ground stimulated by the **NYRG** is a product of the energy and verve of the young people and **NYRG** team. It is also a product of the professional way all those working in the network have approached the task of promoting involvement.

Our assessment suggests that this sort of success does not come cheap, that sustaining involvement and promoting it as a key element of future development takes time, energy and commitment.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations that the **NYRG** team and funders may wish to consider for implementation in the coming year.

The recommendations are not about fundamental changes, none are needed, but are about enhancing and developing the **NYRG** further.

Some are based on comments from people we have spoken to and others are based on our experience of involvement projects in other sectors.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

there is the scope to develop the regional elements of the **NYRG** further in the coming year. We suggest that investing time in setting up regional virtual hubs and meetings could help young people in a region to develop not just a **NYRG** identity but a regional identity and network.

This might increase the scope for involvement, promote mentoring opportunities, help to sustain local improvements in delivery and help to track outcomes following events etc.

INFLUENCING CHIEF OFFICERS AND DECISION MAKERS

the evidence from the literature and from experience suggest that youth involvement, or indeed any service user involvement, is more likely to be sustainable and have a greater impact if the most senior staff and decision makers are behind it.

The evidence from some participants of events is that chief officers etc often don't attend longer events but could benefit from a shorter very intense exposure to the **NYRG**. We suggest that the **NYRG** investigate developing a brief intervention aimed at senior staff and decision makers and then seek to test this out at a major event or in a local authority area.

FOLLOW UP AFTER EVENTS AND TRACKING IMPACT

the **NYRG** relies on the clients they have worked with to provide much of the feedback on the effectiveness of events and interventions. We suggest that the **NYRG** devise a simple follow up approach that is designed to capture the impact of events and track what difference they have made.

This could include the young people in the **NYRG** network in following up with organisers, making return visits to assess impact etc after events as well as web based questionnaires etc.

EXTENDING THE REACH INTO OTHER YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICES

a number of participants and the young people themselves suggest that the **NYRG** should begin to market its services beyond the homelessness and housing field more vociferously and highlighted a number of service areas that might benefit from their input.

For example Youth Justice Teams, Children's Services Departments the NHS, whilst the remit of the **NYRG** is clearly focused on homelessness these other agencies do have a contribution to make to reducing homelessness and could be influential in promoting youth involvement.

We suggest that the **NYRG** begins to explore the possibility of promoting involvement in some of these areas noted above whilst ensuring that their focus remains on homelessness and issues. An approach could be made to the Youth Justice Board for example to explore how learning could be transferred across service boundaries.

FACILITATING THE EXPANDING NYRG YOUNG PEOPLE MEMBERSHIP

a number of the young people we spoke to were at the point of moving into work or training and were expecting to have less involvement with the **NYRG** but they wanted to stay in contact and to maintain that sense of belonging to something big and exciting.

As the project develops and if there is a focus on some regional development there is an opportunity to create a virtual network for the young people involved that could encourage and support people, promote individual development and offer opportunities for mentoring etc.

One suggestion made by a young person is to develop a secure web space for young people to use, a **NYRG** face book or similar. We suggest the **NYRG** explore the possibility of such a site but take particular care to ensure that any option adopted prompted the safety and security of those using it.

BUILDING CVS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

as noted above a number of the young people involved in the **NYRG** are already moving into work or training options and their experience with the **NYRG** is very important to them and could be a potential boost to their job prospects. Although the informal celebration of success is already well embedded in the work of the **NYRG** there is an opportunity to develop a more formal recording of achievement that could add value to young people's CVs etc. We suggest that the **NYRG** explore the opportunities for developing this further.



TOP TIPS FOR INVOLVEMENT

The evidence from the work of the **NYRG**, and from other sources, suggests that the following 'top tips' are likely to make the job of involving young people more effective.

It is important to note that making something effective is not the same as making something easy!

The headline top tip ... never underestimate how much time and energy it will take to promote robust involvement.

Promoting effective youth involvement means doing the following:

- **Start from where the young person is**
- **Allow young people to set the pace and play to their own strengths**
- **Offer consistent and very regular support and encouragement**
- **Invest time in building confidence and skills**
- **Invest time in nurturing the young person**
- **Accept that young people will have other challenges to face and may not always want to get involved to a time scale that suits you**
- **Remember involvement is not the same as consultation, both are valid approaches but they are different**
- **Involve people in something they can contribute to**
- **Involve people honestly (be clear what can be changed and what can not)**
- **Invest time in getting your stakeholders and decision makers on board with involvement**
- **Don't be afraid to try out different ways of involving people, work on the premise that the old ways of involvement are more likely to deliver the same old ways of doing things**
- **Prepare stakeholders and funders for the fact that involvement is for 'life not just for Christmas' and that it will always take time and effort to support it**

Super top tip: The NYRG website can help you to find ideas and ways of working that will help you make the maximum difference.

METHODOLOGY

The following is a brief outline of the methodology we used to carry out this review.

We carried out 12 semi-structured interviews with young people who had been or are still involved with the **NYRG**. The interviews used a set of question areas and headings and were conducted over the phone at a time agreed to suit the young person.

We carried out 20 semi-structured interviews with service providers and stakeholders who had worked with **NYRG** either at an event or in some significant capacity. The interviews were carried out over the phone.

We carried out a small number of in depth interviews with staff at St Basils who are involved with the support to the **NYRG**.

We were given access to a range of feedback material from events held across the country, this included feedback forms, collated data from feedback forms and emails.

We reviewed a range of material and presentations developed by the **NYRG**.

The bulk of the analysis was based on 'content analysis' of the interview transcripts and notes, feedback material, emails etc. There was some quantitative analysis of the comments made in feedback forms etc.







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