

MAYOR OF LONDON

Children and Young People as Partners Handbook



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Introduction from Mary Harpley, Chief Officer, GLA



“One of my most memorable introductory sessions with City Hall teams shortly after joining the GLA in 2019 was with the Peer Outreach Workers (POW) team.

I was delighted to meet members of the team in 2019, whom I learned really represent the diverse life experiences of young Londoners. They have a strong track record of supporting the Mayor and his teams to engage, inspire and gather the opinions of other young people in the capital.

When the Mayor appointed me as his Dementia Champion for the GLA Group, one of my first priorities was to increase the number of Dementia Friends – which is a great way to become more dementia aware. The focus is on us all taking practical action as individuals, with our families and communities and in our work.

Alfie, Javaun and Kelsea from the Peer Outreach Team, with the support from Becs and Mark have been fantastic. They quickly got involved, trained as champions and have run Dementia Friends sessions for me and the Senior Leadership Team and for other teams across the GLA. They did a brilliant job engaging colleagues in this important and sometimes misunderstood subject.

I see their help to drive forward our commitment to making London the first dementia-friendly capital city in the world as a terrific example of the valuable role that Peer Outreach Workers can make working alongside GLA group teams.

In 2020, they have run workshops and a lunchtime session on youth participation for GLA group teams and I recommend this complementary resource of a Handbook to all managers and officers.

Their ideas and input to our work can inspire improvements in how Londoners all live, as you will see in this Handbook through some great examples of their recent projects and initiatives.”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Harpley".

Chief Officer, Greater London Authority

Introduction from James Sloam, PhD, Royal Holloway, University of London, Author of YouthQuake (2017)

“It is essential that young people are involved in the co-production of policy”



We live in ageing societies and ageing democracies, in which the voices of young people are often lost. The implications for policymaking are negative – it leads to policy that is reactive rather than future-oriented, as policymakers try to cope with the present rather than plan.

Younger generations have borne the brunt of the 2008 Great Recession and are increasingly concerned about the looming climate emergency. Beyond the immediate health risks, the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is already devastating for many young people: from job losses, to the lack of mental health provision, to the loss of schooling. However, subsequent cuts in public spending are likely to make the situation even worse.

In this context, it is essential that young people are involved in the co-production of policy. There is clear evidence – for example, from the United Nations and OECD – to show that youth engagement in policymaking is essential for good, sustainable governance. It ensures that we are asking the right questions about what is needed, and that policy solutions will work on the ground.

The Peer Outreach Team and other groups within the GLA already do an exceptional job at amplifying youth voice. However, we can do better. Young people should be there at the early stages of policy-making – helping to co-produce and road-test policies in each of the GLA’s areas of competence.

In the aftermath of the crisis, it is essential that London fully harnesses its human capital and makes full use of the resources it has. Partnering with children and young people needs to be a central part in the solution, to make sure that the capital really is a city for all young Londoners.

Professor James Sloam, Department of Politics and International Relations



Chapter 1: The Peer Outreach Workers Team, Lynk Up Crew, VRU Youth Action Group, Team London Young Ambassadors and London Youth Assembly

Who are the Peer Outreach Team?

The Mayor's Peer Outreach Workers (POWs) are a team of 30 young people aged 15-25, set up in 2006.

The POW team works with children and young people across London helping to make their views count, so that young Londoners ideas inspire improvements in how Londoners all live and more young people are encouraged to play an active part in civic society.

Members are nominated through a variety of youth or other organisations across London and come with diverse backgrounds and life experiences including being young parents, not being in employment education or training (NEET), care experienced, refugee and asylum seekers and having had involvement in the criminal justice system.

They are employed on a sessional worker basis and paid at the London Living Wage, whilst being provided with training opportunities. There is no fixed time that they can be on the team for, but there is a healthy "through put" as the young people tend to move on to some combinations of university or jobs and several have started their own enterprises.

Ten POWs successfully applied for jobs in City Hall over recent years.

Who are the Lynk Up Crew?

Running the Lynk Up Crew (LUC) is one of the POW team's most important projects. The LUC meet regularly each month at City Hall and are encouraged to attend some of the wider activities of the POWs where appropriate. In December 2020, with POW support, LUC members co-chaired the Children's Rights Inquiry.

They are children and young people, aged between 7 and 14 years old, from across London from various backgrounds and diverse life experiences.

They act as the Mayor's young advisory group, supporting the work of teams across City Hall and external organisations to provide valuable insight into the issues affecting this age group.

The group provides a safe space for them to make friends and to influence policies and strategies. and many have learning difficulties and physical disabilities.

Travel expenses are paid to those on request and refreshments are provided for each session.

Who are the Violence Reduction Unit's Youth Advisory Group?

The London Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) commenced operation in March 2019, with a remit to coordinate a new public health approach to reducing violence.

In the VRU's second full year of operation, the Unit is using this invaluable intelligence to expand its programme of work with parents and families, in schools and PRUs, with hospitals and the police, with young people themselves, and with the youth practitioners that support them.

Listening to and promoting the voices of young people and communities is one of the VRU's core values. In recognition of the need for the genuine involvement of young people, the Unit has set up a youth programme to ensure the voice of young people is amplified and young people are given the opportunity to lead change.

Ten impressive young people from across London with lived experience of violence or campaigning on youth issues have come together to form a new Young People's Action Group. This group will directly influence the VRU's work and ensure that decisions are made with the input of London's young people.

The youth leaders are also undertaking training covering professional and personal development, equality, inclusion and diversity, which will provide them with the skills and support to undertake their role effectively and to provide support within their own personal lives.

Who are Team London Young Ambassadors?

Since 2013, Team London Young Ambassadors has supported thousands of young people to take action on issues they care about such as serious youth violence, the environment, homelessness, gender equality, health and wellbeing and community integration.

The programme also has a representative Youth Advisory Board which gathers young people, 9-18 years old, from across London to support Team London and its delivery partners develop the programme.

Young people are also able to discuss the issues they think are most important and instruct the programme to prioritise them when designing support and resources.

What is the London Youth Assembly?

The London Youth Assembly (LYA) provides an opportunity to amplify youth voices in London and work together to ensure tangible change is made for all young Londoners.

The LYA is a voluntary federation of existing London boroughs' youth councils, supported by the Greater London Authority. It comprises representatives selected by each of the Borough Youth Councils and Forums, with the aim of providing young people with a forum where they can come together and share ideas, best practice, knowledge, expertise and resources with each other, for the benefit of young people across our city.

The core functions of the London Youth Assembly are: to coordinate existing campaigns and work undertaken by individual London borough youth councils across London in order to achieve better outcomes; to provide a forum for young people to engage with, and hear from, key people in London government; and to provide a forum through which young people in London can contribute to the development of plans and policies, for example by being given and responding to consultations on key strategic issues within London government.

Chapter 2: What does Young People's Participation mean at the GLA?

The Mayor wants every young Londoner to be inspired and equipped to participate in London's renewal and future growth as our communities recover from COVID-19. This means that the non-negotiables in our work at City Hall and with external partners are:

- Young people are empowered to be involved in decisions that affect them and have the opportunity to be leaders and decision-makers at City Hall and in their communities.
- Young people co-create City Hall's young people's policy, programmes, messaging and communications.
- Opportunities offered by City Hall are fair, equal and ensure young people are supported appropriately.
- City Hall's work with young people is based on what young people want and offers long-term benefits to young Londoners.
- Young people's involvement is recognised and rewarded.
- Youth organisations and youth workers are involved and supported (both financially and otherwise) to do what they do best.

This means considering, as appropriate, how can we:

- Build in regular debate and conversation with young people from London's diverse communities about their aspirations, questions and concerns.
- Genuinely co-produce with young people policy ideas and decisions through City Hall's response and recovery work.
- Create messaging directed at young people that is relevant, resonant and has optimal reach.
- Supporting youth workers and organisations to adapt and continue their work through the transition and recovery periods.

Ethos and principles of participation

The POW motto is '***through the action of young Londoners, comes real change***'. The POW team uses the general principles below to guide their work, including where they are supporting young people's engagement in the [Young Londoners Fund](#):

- Create change - empower and inspire young people to create change
- Understand the diverse needs of the young people that we support
- Truly represent the diversity of young Londoners
- Challenge negative perceptions of young people
- Give young people a voice
- Make sure young people are co-directing our work
- Create opportunities to develop young people skills

Further GLA and National Youth Agency principles for youth engagement in developing policy and delivering and evaluating programmes that support young people are:

- Understanding the different levels when involving young people
- Developing two way positive relationships
- Working with a diverse range of young people
- Different ways to hear young people's voice
- Reflecting and taking action on feedback
- Creating safe and welcoming environments
- Including young people creates a culture that makes a difference

The rest of the Handbook will outline how you can deliver these aspirations and apply these principles drawing on the GLA Education and Youth's team's youth participation experience.

Chapter 3: Working with the Peer Outreach Workers (POW) Team

What can the Peer Outreach Team do for you?

The work of the POWs helps shape City Hall policies, strategies and services from culture and health, to regeneration, environment, transport and violence reduction

At any one time, the POWs may be working on up to 15 pan-London projects: POW projects aim to tackle various issues that young Londoners face, including around mental health and well-being, youth crime or challenging discrimination.

**“THROUGH THE ACTIONS OF YOUNG LONDONERS COMES
REAL CHANGE”**

GIVING ALL YOUNG LONDONERS A VOICE

Here are some examples of how the POW team can support your work:

- Pilot new approaches to improve participation of and engagement with young people
- Help to evaluate policies and programmes at City Hall and beyond for their relevance to and impact on young Londoners, including peer evaluation
- Show how to and support to setting of a Youth Board or equivalent mechanisms
- Run focus groups with children and young people of different ages
- Do ‘street interviews’ or ‘mystery shopping’ exercises with and on behalf of young people
- Facilitate “imaginary London” scenarios from a young Londoner’s perspective, such as around the environment, culture or transport aspects of London living
- Produce young people-led social media content – such as a series of mental health related and Youth Consumer Service podcasts (see below)

Mental Health

1. Coping with Lockdown Stresses: Instagram Accounts to Follow
2. Coping with Lockdown Stresses: Organisations that can Help
3. The New Normal: Major Life Changes Impacting Young People
4. Managing Your Mental Health Online
5. Protecting Mental Health Within a Challenging Job Market

Covid-19

1. Communicate with your Employer
2. New Police Powers
3. Health and Protection
4. Extreme Hardship
5. Lockdown Stresses

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeqXIKmryOzph-2re0RYg2g/videos>

Example 1: Work with the Content Creatives and the Youth Consumer Service

POWs have made a number of short videos in partnership with the Content Creatives and the Youth Consumer Service. These are designed to help young people on a number of topics, including but not limited to: financial issues and money problems, especially affecting them during the Covid-19 pandemic, mental health, extreme hardship and more.

POWs are presenters on the subject of Covid-19 misinformation online and how young people can stop it spreading.

The latest one is in support of The Centre for Countering Digital Hate's 'Don't Spread the Virus'. Other topics were on health and race, and on care leavers.

Example 2: Work with Thrive London

Thrive London, supported by the Mayor of London and the London Health Board, is a citywide movement for mental health. It strives for London to be:

1. A city where individuals and communities are in the lead
2. A city free from mental health stigma and discrimination
3. A city that maximises the potential of children and young people
4. A city with a happy, healthy and productive workforce
5. A city with services that are there when and where needed
6. A zero- suicide city

London's communities, organisations and services will come together to support the movement with an important goal: for Londoners to enjoy healthier happier lives.

Below are links to three podcasts in which the Peer Outreach Team partnered with Thrive London during London's lockdown:

Thrive London Podcasts

- Young Carers: <https://thrivedn.co.uk/season-2-episode-5-act-on-young-carers/>
- Health and Race: <https://thrivedn.co.uk/season-2-episodes-10-and-11-act-on-health-and-race/>



Helping the POWs to excel for you

We asked our Peer Outreach Workers to give officers across the GLA and wider some guidance in their words on how best to work with you.

Excelling as stakeholders:

Judge us on the work as you would any other stakeholder or partner and not just as young people.

For activities that aim to get a representation of youth voices, a minimum of 4 POWs should be included to ensure that the organisation isn't using one voice to represent all youth.

Don't make any assumptions about us just because we're young people, as we will have been picked by Becs and Mark because of our knowledge and experience in that field.

Encourage companies who are benefiting from using the input and voices of young people to compensate them. It doesn't have to be in the form of cash. It could be vouchers or some other form of compensation. If these companies really value their opinion and want to empower youth, they should compensate them for their contributions.

Excelling by communicating:

Please give all of the POWs equal opportunity by going through the managers of the team and not just contacting the same POWs.

Not just last minute, you need give us as much time as any other professional team, we don't live in a cupboard real or virtual.

Don't leave stuff up in the air maybe get other team members to carry on the communication.

POWs have other stuff and are casual staff and will have other commitments so please be patient if we can't respond to communications straight away.

Don't contact directly always cc in Becs or Mark or both consider they have to support every team member and make sure they all get opportunities.

Excelling at events:

If we need to bring any other necessary equipment such as pens, paper etc please let us know.

If there is any other background info or reading please send with enough notice and time to read, explain.

Events that take place off-site should include clear instructions, ideally a map and photo of the exterior of the building.

It would be helpful if organisations could provide some guidance as to the appropriate dress code for that activity.

This is not currently relevant, but in-person events that are less than 4 hours should reimburse travel costs. I, as well as other POWs, have attended events where we lost money, because of the time and cost involved in going to a 2-hour event.

Now that most events are taking place virtually, it would be helpful to highlight that many POWs do not have access to laptops and may have limited or unreliable WiFi. As such, they shouldn't be held to the standard you would expect of someone who has a fully-funded and well equipped home office through which to work from.

Excelling by safeguarding:

We will want to know how you're going to use the information and how you are going to store it or, make it anonymous.

Consult with Becs and Mark before asking for any POWs personal details if it's necessary. For example, a Gmail account, personal number or home address.

If you're going to ask us personal questions, please send in advance so we can decide beforehand if we feel able to answer them or email them or make sure you have the right people there to support the outcome.

When running events/projects, sessions etc please protect their personal information or go directly through the relevant person you are reaching out to.

We all have a duty of care especially when we involve young people in emotive and personal conversations that we need to make sure that there is the necessary understanding and support for those who may become more affected by the session and its contents.

Excelling in general:

Attend some of our other events to support our wider work and to see what we are doing.

We have weekly team meetings. If you would like and are able to please come and visit us and hear about all the other things we are doing.

Please make sure we get the full information and proper timings for any activities as we will be paid accordingly. Please respect our budget.

Top 10 tips from POWs for involving young people

- 1) **Involve us:** Young people must be actively involved in decision making through more formal positions of power with organisation not just feedback forms and focus groups. i.e. creating youth leadership roles such as youth Board members, peer facilitators and mystery shoppers.
- 2) **Value us:** Young people deserve the right to be treated maturely and given the power to have their say in decisions concerning them.
- 3) **Learn with us:** Young people must have a key role in assessing and scrutinising youth participation in their organisations.
- 4) **See us as equals:** Ensure there is a power balance between staff and young people.
- 5) **Create a safe space:** Young people should have a clean, safe, accessible, youth friendly environment.
- 6) **A sense of belonging:** Young people should have an environment that supports participation, to give them a space to belong.
- 7) **Support us:** Ensure staff are constantly supporting young people to build and maintain trust for genuine, long term, relatable relationships
- 8) **Develop us and help us grow:** Ensure you are providing progression opportunities for your young people e.g. courses, qualification and employment etc.
- 9) **Be inclusive:** Youth organisation must strive to have a diverse range of staff for example different ethnicities, religion, culture, disabilities, sexualities and life experiences. To increase inclusion and encourage diversity staff should be given training on diversity inclusion, safeguarding and participation.
- 10) **Know our needs:** Cater to young people's need e.g. food, trips, vouchers from consultation with them.

Chapter 4: The Young Londoners Participation Network

What is the Young Londoners Participation Network?

The Young Londoners Participation Network (YLPN) was established by the Peer Outreach Team over ten years ago. Over 400 providers who work with children and young people from the voluntary, statutory and business sectors are YLPN members and a regular 50 to 100 attend quarterly network meetings.

At the quarterly network meetings, members share experiences, provide information and problem solve. Every network meeting has a main theme or topic and then a standing 'spotlight' session where any organisation can present their programme or project to the group.

If you work with children and young people in any capacity in London then the network provides an excellent opportunity to meet other organisations, find out about relevant projects and services, and even identify future partners. Many GLA teams have used this network positively in the past – you are welcome to come and do the same. Whether that be presenting at a network meeting or simply coming along to meet some new people from the sector.

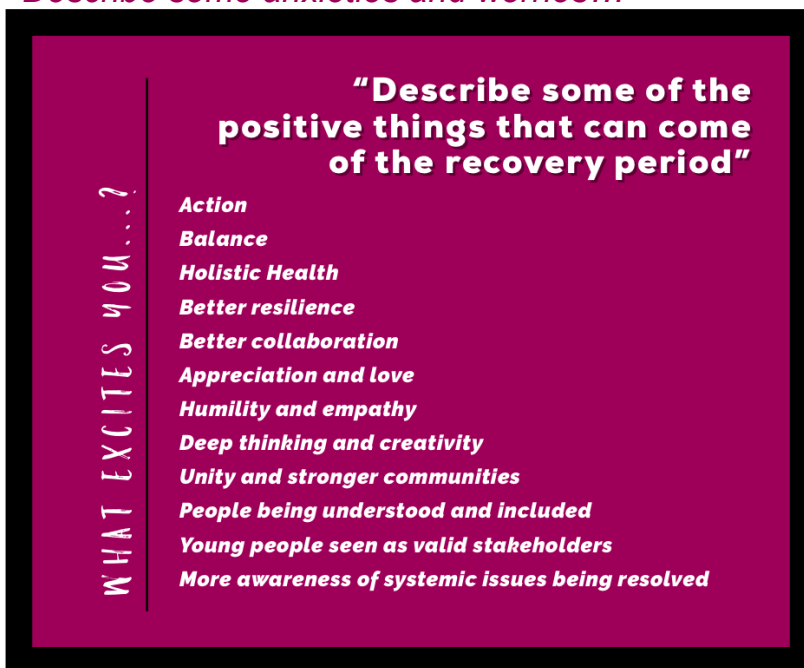


Chapter 5: Children and Young People as Partners Workshops

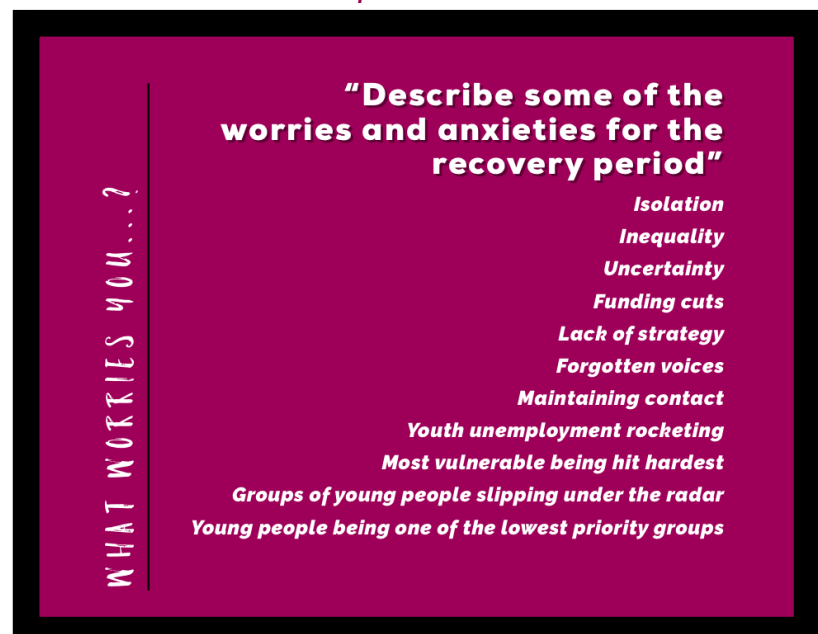
The Children and Young People as Partners Workshop Series

During the Spring and Summer of 2020, the POWs hosted a series of Children and Young People as Partners Workshops for City Hall staff. Attendees were asked to answer two of the following questions with one word in the chat bar.

“Describe some anxieties and worries...”



“Describe some of the positives...”





Chapter 6: GLA Officers and External Partners: Testimonials

“Through the actions of young Londoners comes real change”. This Peer Outreach team statement describes exactly what participation is all about. A city that is a safe and nurturing space for young Londoners is also a great city for all.

Strong outcomes of POW work are evidenced in consistently highly positive feedback from many project leads in the GLA group and beyond, in terms of the engagement and enjoyment of involving young people, as well as the impact they have had on the development of policy or delivery.

Feedback from GLA Officers

“The programmes we fund deliver activities for young Londoners and therefore including the opinions, questions and lived experience of the POWs in the Young London Inspired grants decision making process has been invaluable for us.”

**Chloe Holness, Youth Social Action
Project Officer, Team London and Sport**

“The POWs bring energy, enthusiasm and new ways of looking at issues. I’ve really enjoyed working with them and it’s been inspiring to see the way they’ve engaged with people with dementia and our partners. It’s also great to watch them grow and develop as they embark on their careers.”

**Gus Wilson,
London Health Board Secretariat
Manager**

“I believe Youth Participation is important, because nothing should be done about and for young people without their voice included. Services and/or organisations can waste a lot of their time, energy and ideas. We may think we know it all, but without checking with young people, we may be behind in knowing what the right approach is. It’s also simply super fun and energising working with young people.”

**Jerome Harvey-Agyei, Senior Children & Youth Participation
Officer, Violence Reduction Unit**

“It has been my privilege to work with young leaders in the POW Team at City Hall on a range of projects – they are always determined to make sure the experiences and views of young Londoners are at the forefront of our policy making.”

**Cliff Fleming, Community Engagement
Officer, Community Engagement Team**

On International Youth Day in August 2019, we lowered the registration age on Talk London, City Hall's online community, from 18 to 16. The Talk London team involved young people (including the Peer Outreach team) every step of the way, including initial workshops with a safeguarding expert to gauge their expectations and concerns. Youth participation is vital in striving to make Talk London as reflective of the London population as possible.

**Katrien Lindemans, Online Community
Engagement Officer, Intelligence Unit**

"Youth participation brings energy, creativity and diversity to what we do. It's vital that young people are involved in the decision making that impacts their

**Charlotte Smith, Senior Project Officer,
Skills and Employment Unit**

Feedback from External Partners

"The Content Creatives has worked with the Young People from the Peer Outreach Team for over a year on a number of projects. We have been immensely impressed and inspired by the immense enthusiasm of its members we have interacted with. Each POW who has worked on our projects has a passion for bringing value to their local communities and improvements to people's lives.

Enthusiasm, dedication, reliability, leadership and a thirst for knowledge are all words & character traits that we would attribute to the group of 15-25 years olds that we worked with from the Peer Outreach Workers (POW) at City Hall."

The Content Creatives

"Team Margot Foundation campaigns for every individual who is eligible, particularly those of mixed heritage, to register as blood, organ, stem cell and bone marrow donors.

In 2017 we were fortunate enough to have the opportunity to hold a photographic exhibition entitled 'The Power of One' and to launch our primary school education programme, 'Giving to help others' at City Hall.

However, when we were introduced to the POW's, we were pleasantly surprised by the support we received from them. They helped us organise our events, they gave ideas and feedback, publicised and encouraged people within their communities to attend our events, and some of the group even became part of our photographic exhibition"

Team Margot Foundation

"Just wanted to say a proper thank you for facilitating the session last Friday [on young people in custody and the experiences they face]. It was so valuable, and I know that all three of us took more away from the session than we ever imagined we would."

**Sam Upton, Head of Strategic
Design & Analysis, MPS**



Chapter 7: Guide to Young People's Participation

Why start thinking about young people's participation at project inception?

Young people are a part of our city and communities and have as much right as the adult population in having a say and shaping London. They are being affected by the policies that govern our society, so they have the right to have a say and be involved in co-design.

Young people come with lots of fresh ideas and new angles which will help to invigorate thinking of those involved.

Some frequently asked questions

Q. Will the Lynk Up Crew understand the issues enough?

A. Yes if you make the conversation and information accessible in terms of language, refraining from using acronyms and in-house speak.

Q. Will it be interesting enough?

A. Young people and children are always interested in most issues, it's just that they are rarely engaged in the conversation about it.

Q. Can we sustain their interests to see it through?

A. You may not keep everyone involved but there will almost certainly be a strong core who will remain interested, especially if it's done in an interesting way.

Q. What if staff don't feel equipped to be working with young people and or children?

A. We can do an initial session with the staff who will be involved to make them feel more confident and relaxed in running the session(s) and can then be around for further support.

Q. What if their participation is a bit erratic?

A. When you're trying to engage young people and children with diverse backgrounds and experiences, it can take a while, but it will work and we have got great relations, not just with our own POW team, but external organisations and young people too.

What are the next steps in involving young people in my project?

Whether it's at the beginning of a project or part way through, it's never too early or too late to involve young people and children as partners. It's as simple as sending one email and starting off the conversation.

It's obviously preferable if children and young people are involved from the start as they can then help shape and bring their own innovation to it. It's really important to remember that it may take a little longer to create the right space, time and method of engagement and participation than it would normally take with colleagues, but it's well worth the extra time as we hope to prove by the end of this handbook!

To get things going contact Rebecca Palmer and/or Mark Mouna (see chapter 10).

Some frequently asked questions

Q. What if we don't have the staff who feel confident in taking this forward?

A. We can always have a catch up to see what it is that they are anxious about and our team have some great project managers on board. They can lead on quite a lot of the process and we will be supporting all the way.

Q. How do we manage expectations?

A. It's important to be up front from the beginning about what's possible and what isn't. That way, there is no misunderstanding.

Q. What if we don't have time to fit it into the project programme?

A. Even if it's a tight deadline, it's still important to try and make it happen and we will be open about whether it's possible or not.

Q. What if we feel it's not an issue that affects young Londoners?

A. Pretty much everything that affects Londoners will be affecting children and young people so don't rule it out.

Q. What if we don't get the support from management to get young Londoners involved?

A. It's important to raise it at that level to get buy-in from early stages. The support given to the programme from both the Mayor and his chief officer has meant the team has felt more confident in driving the programme forward.



How can the young people be part of presenting and disseminating project findings or policy development?

It's great if you can show how children and young people have participated in your project or programme. One of the most effective ways of doing this is to have them present the findings or final decisions to a wider audience or meeting of key partners. That way they can take some ownership of the process publicly. They also have great ideas about different ways of presenting which are not just 'death by PowerPoint'!

Some frequently asked questions

Q. What if they have a different vision on how to present?

A. Maybe their vision is a bit out there, but it's certainly worth a try. It's often good to present in different ways, we have tried it and it works.

Q. What if they get the information wrong?

A. This can happen, even if there's been plenty of prep but if they are supported by your team and ours, it's easy to correct on the spot or afterwards. Most audiences are really happy to hear from young people and see them presenting so are quite forgiving.

Q. What if they don't have the skills to write or present the findings?

A. This is where the previous point makes more sense and would make them feel more like co-designers, if there are different ways they can present their findings, research etc. It's just a case of working it through and making enough time to do so.

Q. What if they are not happy with the outcome?

A. This very rarely happens and can sometimes be because of circumstances out of our control. Then, it's important to have a proper de-brief and explain.

Why is it important to feedback the results or outcomes to the young people involved and involve them in the review and follow up?

Children and young people often get survey/questionnaire fatigue, and this is made ten times worse when they don't even get to hear about the results. It can create an, understandably cynical attitude to taking part again.

If they are part of reviewing the findings and discussing what the outcomes mean in terms of future actions, then they are more likely to take part again in the future and will have more respect for their involvement. Don't be put off needing to say, in some cases, what can be taken forward and what might not be possible to do. They can also play a key role in any follow up and dissemination.

All the above will help to make children and young people feel valued as members of society and will encourage their active citizenship in the future.

Some frequently asked questions

Q. What if it may take too long to collate and disseminate?

A. If you keep them informed, even if there's nothing to report, it's still important to keep communication flowing. Don't forget, some of our Peer Outreach members can help with that part of the process too.

Q. What if they overly criticise the programme?

A. Being constructive in their criticism is okay, but sometimes that happens because it hasn't been explained effectively enough and it's just confusion.

Q. What if they are still cynical?

A. That can be the case with professionals and adults anyway. Young people are often less negative, especially if their role is being taken seriously.

Q. What if nothing can be done immediately to affect some sort of change?

A. Again, if the process is transparent and there's an understanding of the process however good or bad, then it's ok.

Chapter 8: POW Testimonials: Hear from the POWs themselves

Alfie



“I have been fortunate enough to foster many good relationships with external organisations and brilliant individuals, which in turn has led to multiple jobs and experiences”

My journey to the team is a great example of the butterfly effect; how someone else’s journey can often result in a destination for yourself.

A very good friend of mine, someone who I consider a brother, had been going through what must have been an eye-opening/watershed moment for him. As a staunch practising Catholic, he had only recently opened himself up to the idea of his sexuality not being the way he had thought or hoped. With these new-found questions, he found himself directly contacting the Catholic Church’s representative in London, in the aim to figure out a path of understanding in which he hoped would lead to a destination of acceptance, of who he was and how he would fit into this modern London of ours.

I was lucky enough to be able to lend an ear to a friend who needed a little support at a certain time. He found himself being given time and space to talk about his views, and in doing so, it had become apparent that such enthusiasm and a thirst for understanding could be put to a real quantifiable destination: being on the Peer Outreach Team. This is where I come in. I believe my name was mentioned to Rebecca Palmer, a lady whom I would never truly realise how instrumental she would be just a few months into being a part of my life.

It would be cool to be a fly on a wall, all those years ago, for if I was, I am not too sure if I would indeed be able to recognise myself. My time at City Hall, and more importantly, part of the Peer Outreach Team, has been by far the biggest vehicle of change in my life. If I could draw a picture or write an analogy, I would say, at the beginning of my time as a Peer Outreach Worker, I was a high-rise building, with many floors, still very much in the middle of the building process. With each year passing, and with multiple projects both providing me the opportunity to lead and to be part of a team, these floors found themselves strengthening.

Being on the team itself, with some of the best and brilliant young minds from all over London, helped in smoothing out the edges of this build; these minds came with experiences and perspectives that added light like windows and direction to what was previously a long dark corridor. Being given the ability to lead on projects, coordinating

with professionals, both inside and outside of City Hall, gave me the confidence to plan and be that little bit more certain on where this build is going.

Anmol

“I have had the opportunity to project manage so many important events at City Hall, which is crazy to say that a young person has managed this event, but what is even crazier is managing a whole event led by young people in Parliament!”



I am a children’s rights activist as I believe every child should have their rights met by the government and live a happy and healthy life. Through my activism I worked with a children’s rights charity. They nominated me to attend the first Children’s Rights Inquiry back in November 2016. That is where I met the Peer Outreach Team and Becs, as it was led and run by them. We kept in contact and she invited me down for an interview. I was successful and joined the team in February 2017. It has been up and up since then and there are so many great projects, I have been able to be involved in as well as manage like the following Children Rights Inquiries!

There are countless ways in which I have developed as an individual. I have gained so many skills such as working in a team efficiently, project managing, time management, professionalism... all these skills

I have learnt and developed that I wouldn’t have otherwise had the opportunity to being stuck in a retail job where not much responsibility is given to you.

Another way in which I have developed is that I have become a lot more nurturing and open towards other people as I have learnt a lot from the projects we have run and partaken in but also from the other Peer Outreach Workers. As we are all from different backgrounds, I have had the pleasure of learning a lot from my team personally and professionally.

I have been able to meet so many professional people and those from various organisations. I have had the opportunity to project manage so many important events at City Hall, which is crazy to say that a young person has managed this event, but what is even crazier is managing a whole event led by young people in Parliament! (The Children’s Rights Inquiry). These opportunities would have not arisen if I hadn’t had been involved with the team. I am grateful for every opportunity and look forward to what is to come.

Kismet

“Being on the team has allowed me to see London as it is and the positive work that goes. I didn’t realise all the things that were going on for young people, who may have been out of touch with society, like myself once upon a time!”



I was on a youth panel for DePaul UK as I was a service user. I was invited to a hustings event during the elections in 2016. At this time, I was living in the YMCA and wanted to ask why I would be made homeless again for wanting to go to university. I had many prepared questions for the panel, in which Jon Snow had chaired. I was then later scouted by Helen Stonelake and Junior Lagranha from the GLA’s E&Y team to come and meet the team and Becs.

I have developed many transferable skills such as mindfulness, mental health first-aid and safe-guarding. The biggest growth within me must be my confidence within networking and building relationships with partners. I have also been given the chance to engage with my creative side again, which I had missed a lot. I’ve also made friends, who I feel will be for life and have expanded my knowledge on how UK politics works within actuality– not just what is explained within textbooks.

Overall, I have become a better person, equipped with a much better understanding on why young people can feel disengaged from society and politics, moreover, the support available to young people within those situations.

Furthermore, I have learned patience and compassionate understanding are key to bettering futures and I am so thankful with how the team has done this for me.

Being on the team has allowed me to see London as it is and the positive work that goes. I didn’t realise all the things that were going on for young people, who may have been out of touch with society, like myself once upon a time! I love drama and theatre and was able to do a show with The Big House Theatre Company. This was amazing as it was then taken to the Royal Court Theatre. This achievement and experience helped me channel all negative emotions into art and made me realise my talents. The show also helped me realise I wasn’t alone and that I had found a way to express myself, without feeling strange or invalid in doing so.

I’ve also networked and met a wonderful spoken word and poetry community in London, through the works of City Hall. I have come across some amazing and inspirational talent, projects and work over the years. Additionally, being on the team helped me through my studies at university and in general, life and how to channel finding a balance and happiness whilst actively advocating for positive changes within our society.

Kamahl

“Being on the team has let me know about opportunities that were unknown to me beforehand, allowed me to reach people in influential positions and show my skills more, being a part of the team”



I became a peer outreach worker by coincidentally attending the City Hall Stop and Search community monitoring board where I met the amazing Florence (Peer Outreach Worker), who after speaking to me at the board explained that my passion and opinions would be welcomed and useful in the peer outreach worker team. Around four weeks later I applied.

I would say so far, I have developed myself. I've learnt several things. The first being that there is no such thing as a wrong question/proposal.

Being on the team has let me know about opportunities that were unknown to me beforehand, allowed me to reach people in influential positions and show my skills more, being a part of the team.

Hear from former Lynk Up Crew members

Jesse

“It’s completely crazy to see the knowledge these young people have and every session they teach me new ways of thinking and different perspectives on topics.”



Having the privilege of facilitating conversation between young people is something I will never take for granted. It’s completely crazy to see the knowledge these young people have and every session they teach me new ways of thinking and different perspectives on topics.

I feel like I am the student in every conversation. This means a lot to me because I am able to facilitate sessions where young people can express their opinions freely without judgement and this is something that is hard to find especially as a young person living in London.

This also helps then build communication skills for the future which they can bring into their future careers and aspirations.

Precious

“Being given the opportunity to share my thoughts as a child in a place like City Hall fuelled me with confidence, self-awareness and eagerness to learn from a young age.”

Being a member of the Lynk Up Crew honestly changed the trajectory of my life. Being given the opportunity to share my thoughts as a child in a place like City Hall fuelled me with confidence, self-awareness and eagerness to learn from a young age.

The Lynk Up Crew provided me with a safe space where I was able to have open dialogue with my counterparts and learn from the Peer Outreach team. More than anything being on the Lynk Up crew enabled me to have the confidence to join the POW team.

Chapter 9: Children and Young People's Safeguarding

Once you have decided that you want to engage and involve children and young people in your work, how should you do so safely?

First, the GLA has a full set of child safeguarding policies and procedures to guide you and a team to offer more guidance and advice. As a starting point, do read the Child Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct, and then review other sections as relevant to you.

For example, on procurement or grant-making, running events and involving young people as speakers and what to do if you need to report a child protection concern.

We all have a duty of care – especially when we involve young people in emotive and personal conversations through events or social media – to make sure that there is the necessary understanding and support for those who may become more affected by the session and its contents.

Where can I find the Corporate Child Policy and Protection Procedures (CPPP)?

<http://intranet.london.gov.uk/pages/gla-child-policy-and-protection-procedures>

How can I get more guidance or advice on child safeguarding?

You can contact one of the three Designated Child Safeguarding Officers: Jason Lever, Rebecca Palmer and Dan Rowson, in the Education and Youth team, by emailing: childsafeguarding@london.gov.uk (phone numbers if urgent are on the Intranet page link above).

What about if my query or concern is more in terms of social media or relating to digital communications and platforms?

The GLA has a Digital Safeguarding Policy at: <http://intranet.london.gov.uk/node/16643>

How can I get further guidance or advice on digital safeguarding?

There is also a small team of officers who can help if you email: digitalsafeguarding@london.gov.uk

Chapter 10: Next Steps and Sources of Further Information

What are the next steps in involving young people in my project?

Whether it's at the beginning of a project or part way through, it's never too early or too late to involve young people and children as partners. It's as simple as sending one email and starting off the conversation.

It's obviously preferable if children and young people are involved from the start as they can then help shape and bring their own innovation to it.

It's really important to remember that it may take a little longer to create the right space, time and method of engagement and participation than it would normally take with colleagues, but it's well worth the extra time as we hope to have shown in this handbook!

See [London.gov.uk pages](#) on the Young Londoners Fund, POW team, Lynk Up Crew and Young Londoners Participation Network.

To start working with the Peer Outreach Workers (POW) team and the Lynk Up Crew, please contact

Rebecca.Palmer@london.gov.uk or Mark.Mouna@london.gov.uk

To join the Young Londoners Participation Network, please contact

Mark.Mouna@london.gov.uk

To find out about the work of the London Violence Reduction Unit's Young Leaders Advisory Group, please contact

Jerome.Harvey-Agyei@london.gov.uk or Darwin.Bernardo@london.gov.uk

To find out more about Team London Young Ambassadors, please contact

Olly.Offord@london.gov.uk

To find out more about the London Youth Assembly, please contact

Georgie.Abbott@london.gov.uk

James Sloam and Matt Henn, 2019, 'Youthquake 2017: the Rise of Young Cosmopolitans in Britain' (Palgrave).

Young Minds, 2020, 'Coronavirus: Impact on Young People with Mental Health Needs'

Resolution Foundation, 2020, '[Young Workers in the Coronavirus Crisis](#)'.

United Nations, 2018, '[Youth 2030: Working With and For Young People](#)'

OECD, 2018 '[Engaging and Empower Youth Across the OECD](#)'.

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