



USER GROUPS

BEST PRACTICE ON HOW TO KEEP
GROUPS OF YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED

What Makes a Good Youth Advisors Group?

The Junction
Youth Advisors
give their
thoughts on
what makes a
good youth
advisors group



EMPOWER YOUTH VOICE

Prioritise the voices of young people by listening and responding to their ideas and needs

Treat everyone equally and be inclusive by recruiting young people from underrepresented backgrounds

OFFER A SAFE PLACE TO HANG OUT

Provide a comfortable and casual setting for the group to meet, which is easily accessible

Be available and take the time to connect with the group individually as well as at meetings to build trust

Encourage the young people to be respectful so that all group members are empowered to share their opinions

Offer a space for friendships to form, for random conversations, and the group to bond

“

“ the JYAs
taught me
that I can
change my
mind ”

”

Anonymous young person

Facilitating a Youth Advisors Group

MANAGE GROUP DYNAMICS

- Encourage the young people to be respectful so that all group members are empowered to share their opinions
- Create and maintain boundaries both to keep the group safe and recognise how much you can ask of young people
- Celebrate individuality and offer a person-centred approach to each group member

INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN DECISION MAKING

- Empower young people to take part in discussions by making sure they have the correct information, building confidence and offering suitable spaces
- Maintain communication between staff, trustees and youth to enable collective decision making
- Take actions based on what young people say where possible

DESIGN INCLUSIVE WAYS TO TAKE PART

- Offer multiple ways for young people to participate in the group, bearing in mind that everyone works differently and has different needs
- Work with the group individually to develop strengths and work on goals

COMMUNICATE FINDINGS IN A WAY WHICH RESONATES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

- Use simple language and explain complicated terms if needed
- Use communication channels chosen by young people

What Brings Young People Back to a User Group?

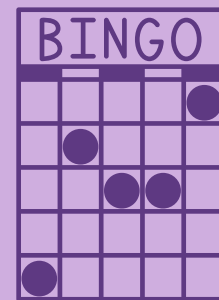


The Girvan Youth Trust User Group share their favourite things about coming along

AGENCY
Working with the
Girvan Youth Trust to
make changes



RESPONSIBILITY
Running bingo nights for the local
community



SOCIALISING
Coming together
to enjoy
takeaway food



CHOICE
Designing the interior and
exterior spaces



FUNDRAISING
Creating hampers to raffle
and raise money

“

“ I come to make friends and
get more confident “

“ It makes me
happy “

“ You can be who
you want “

“ You can meet
new people “

“ We work with
the council to get
stuff done “

”

Members of Girvan Youth Trust's User Group

Which Biscuit?

HOW TO MAKE DECISIONS INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE

A fun exercise to demonstrate the different types of decision making*



Group lead decides what biscuits the group get

1

AUTOCRATIC

An autocratic decision is when someone in authority makes a decision that will affect a group without consulting anyone

Each member of the group is asked to choose their favourite packet of biscuits

2

VOTING

The group decides by casting a vote from a choice of options. If there is an even number of people in the group, they can take a vote to come to a decision

Everyone in the group is asked which biscuit they want. After considering allergies for example, the group might choose to go for the second most popular choice so that everyone can have a biscuit

3

CONSENSUS

Consensus means trying to reach a decision that suits everyone in the group. Ask everyone for their view, knowing that a compromise may need to be made to reach a decision

Everyone in the group votes for the same biscuit

4

UNANIMOUS

When everyone in a group decides the same thing without any debate or voting