



We know that our voices are valued, and that people are actually going to listen”: co-producing an evaluation of a young people’s research advisory group



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eyeYPAG

- Young people’s research advisory group (YPAG)
- Based at Moorfields Children’s Eye Centre, London
- Children and young people (CYP) aged 10-18 with experience of eye and vision conditions, siblings and/or experience of involvement in research
- Funded to co-produce an evaluation



Aims

- To find out what difference the eyeYPAG has made to research, and to group members
- To understand what has worked well and what could be improved after the first two years
- To help improve and plan for the future of the group, and help others interested in involving children and young people in research
- To learn about research by co-producing an evaluation



Methods

Online surveys and focus groups with:

- Young people (eyeYPAG members)
- Researchers who had worked with the group
- Parents
- Funders
- Facilitators



5 young evaluators involved at all stages

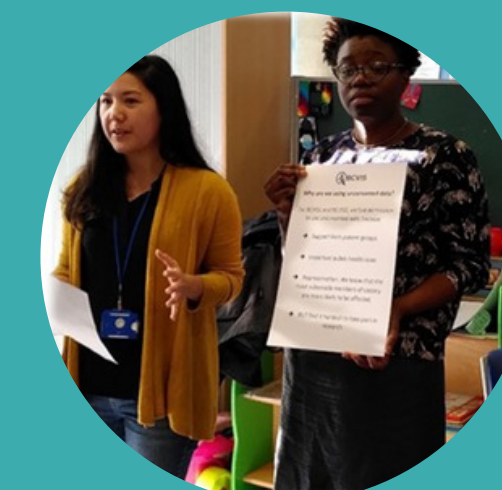
Findings: making a difference

- CYP value meeting others with similar interests or experiences
- Benefits for CYP include: learning about research, developing new skills and confidence and opportunities to do new things
- Involvement making a difference to research is important for both adults and CYP
- Adults feel that involving CYP improves research, and acknowledge their right to be involved.

*[I like] meeting other young people who are also passionate about getting their voices heard, and doing it in a way that we can all work together
(YPAG member)*

Findings: what works

- Planning and skilled facilitation are essential
- Sessions work best when they are as interactive, accessible and creative as possible
- There are advantages to meeting online as well as in person
- Ongoing involvement is better than one-off involvement at the planning/ethics stage
- Using a co-production approach, and combining researcher-led sessions with team-building and young people-led activities is really helpful

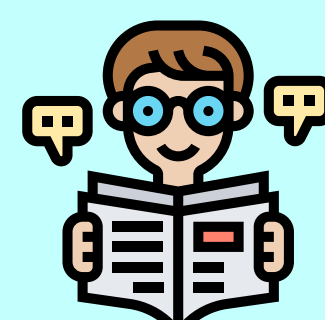


Implications

- Balance between adult and CYP-led activity, and between work/training and creativity and fun
- Awareness of inclusion and accessibility is essential
- COVID19 pandemic created opportunities as well as challenges, enabling new ways of working
- Co-production, underpinned by a children’s rights approach, helps shift the balance of power
- Support and facilitation are key to successful involvement of CYP
- Need to do more to evaluate CYP’s involvement in research, and involve CYP in that evaluation

*It’s changed, not just the research, but me as well... learning how much [CYP] can give to research, has set me up quite early on in my career to make sure that I continue to... make research better
(Researcher)*

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