



YOUTH SPORT TRUST

Youth Voice Toolkit

Developed by



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What is Youth Voice?

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What is Youth Voice?

Youth Voice...

- actively **seeks the views** of young people to **understand** their experiences and perspectives.
- involves them meaningfully in **making and enacting decisions about topics that affect them**.

The Youth Sport Trust recognises that Youth Voice may include any or all of these elements:

Actively seeking the views of young people and supporting them to share their feelings, thoughts, ideas and experiences.

For example, in a school:

Pupils disengaged from PE are asked what they enjoy most and least about PE, and why.

Consultation



Co-production



Collaboration



Enabling young people to design and deliver activities, projects or services.

For example, in a school:

Young leaders plan, deliver and review a lunchtime programme for less-active pupils.

Meaningfully involving young people in making decisions about topics that affect them.

For example, in a school:

A group of low active girls works with PE staff and school leaders to agree changes to the PE kit.

Light to deep

These may overlap, e.g. consultation with a large group informs co-production with a small group.

Youth Voice varies **in depth**. Different numbers of young people may contribute in different ways, for different lengths of time, and at different levels.



Download Inspire me!

for a spectrum of Youth Voice examples.



Download Roles

for ideas and examples of different depths of Youth Voice.

Young People have a right to a voice.



Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states:



Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.”

This applies at all times.



Download a Summary of the UNCRC.



Download a Summary of the UNCRC with Symbols.



Download or read more about the Lundy Model

Why is Youth Voice essential?

Young People have a **right** to a voice.

Youth Voice **benefits** everyone, not just young people. For example:

Young people

- Feel valued and connected
- Gain confidence and self-belief
- Develop transferable life skills
- Have new and more relevant opportunities
- Are fully included and better supported

PE and sport providers

- Provide better, more relevant services
- Increase engagement of young people
- Improve equality, diversity and inclusion
- Develop the current and future workforce
- Increase efficiency and effectiveness

In particular, Youth Voice helps to address current **inequalities** in PE, sport and physical activity – when it reflects the experiences and insights of under-served young people. By enabling more young people to have positive experiences, it also promotes their **physical literacy** – for life.

Think of Youth Voice as a tool: it helps you to better help young people. As with any tool, how you use it makes the difference. Professor Laura Lundy says Youth Voice needs:

SPACE

Safe, inclusive opportunities for young people to form and express their views.

VOICE

Facilitation to enable and support young people with different needs to be involved.

INFLUENCE

A commitment to respond to and act on young people's voices – and report back to them.

AUDIENCE

Willingness to listen to young people with openness, respect and empathy.

The **eight areas** within this toolkit help you to implement the Lundy Model.

What hinders Youth Voice?

Youth Voice helps us to dismantle barriers to participation. But barriers also hinder Youth Voice. These are the main barriers identified by young people. They are common to many under-served young people, but we must also use Youth Voice¹ to identify barriers faced by specific groups and individuals. Never assume!



Practical

- Awareness – limited promotion, no active welcome for diverse people.
- Language – no translation, complex, jargon, unappealing.
- Cost – actual expenses, loss of other income, lack upfront cash.
- Accessibility – of buildings, transport, resources, communication tools.
- Time – unclear, unrealistic, need more, other commitments.



Social

- Diversity – lack role models, fear tokenism, fear discrimination.
- Judgement – from peers – not cool, staff preconceptions.
- Isolation – don't know others, won't fit in, lose time with friends.
- Bullying – personal or virtual – before, during, after sessions.
- Wider pressures – schoolwork, family expectations.



Personal

- Confidence – lack confidence, self-belief, sense of self-efficacy.
- Past experiences – negative experience of sport or Youth Voice.
- Knowledge – unaware of expectations, procedures, purpose.
- Skills – not explicit, not linked to wider aspirations, unrealistic.
- Value – not rewarded/ recognised, no action, no change/ impact.



Sector partners

have also identified their own barriers, such as:

- Confidence – lack knowledge and skills to initiate Youth Voice.
- Tokenism – concern about doing it 'correctly' and thoroughly.
- Time – pressure from other commitments or funders to act quickly.
- Support – need ideas, examples, guidance and proven approaches.
- Reach – how to engage the 'right' young people to effect change.
- Duties – concern about legal, financial, safeguarding implications.

The **eight areas** within this toolkit help you to address the barriers.



Youth Voice isn't worth it when we don't know where it leads to or there's no outcome."



It's not seen as being cool to speak about how you feel to help others."



Not being involved in Youth Voice before leads to worry and doubt about being involved."

¹See acknowledgements on page 6.

What makes Youth Voice meaningful?

There is no 'one way' to implement Youth Voice. However, if it is to be meaningful and effective – for young people and you – it does need to be underpinned by **core principles**. Our co-production group, involving young people, identified these as important principles for Youth Voice.

Youth Voice should be:

Universal

All decisions that affect young people's experience of PE, sport and physical activity should be informed by Youth Voice – we are accountable and should not assume.

Representative

Youth Voice requires diversity – we need young people from different backgrounds and with different experiences, including within targeted groups.

Inclusive

Young people with specific or additional needs should be able to contribute – we need to make space and adapt Youth Voice to include them.

Safe

Young people want to feel welcome, cared for and respected – we need to create a safe, kind, mutually respectful and non-judgemental culture.

Connecting

Young people seek connections to people, places, values and causes that are important to them – we must use Youth Voice to create a sense of belonging.

Empowering

Youth Voice requires confidence, capability, authority and autonomy – we need to upskill and empower young people.

Valued

Young people want their time and insights to make a difference – we need to show that their voices are valued and impactful.

Aspirational

Youth Voice involves risking, trialling, adapting and improving – we must always be willing to learn and change what we do.

The **eight areas** within this toolkit reflect these principles.



Download Self-review

to identify which of the eight areas to prioritise.



Then visit the **areas** you have prioritised for ideas, tips, examples and tools.

Acknowledgements

The Youth Sport Trust Youth Voice Plan was co-produced by young people and Youth Sport Trust staff. The young people on the co-production group included:

A core group of eight young people, aged 16–25 years:

- Zainab Ali
- Grace Best
- Emmanuel Gebreyes
- Radhika Kalia
- Amelia Kozłowska
- Frances Mackie
- Joel Moore
- Abhishna Yogarajan

Three targeted school groups, with pupils aged 11–14 years:

- The Joseph Whitaker School, Mansfield
- Abbeyfield School, Chippenham
- Our Lady and St Chad Catholic Academy, Wolverhampton.

The young people are from diverse backgrounds and have diverse experiences of Youth Voice within school, sport and the Youth Sport Trust.

THANK YOU – your voices were essential and insightful

For further information and Youth Voice resources, visit <https://www.youthsporttrust.org/school-support/free-resources/youth-voice-resources>



Doing something is better than doing nothing. You have to start somewhere, then get better. The most important thing is to dip your toes in: you try and, crucially, you learn. You ask children what worked and what didn't, and you try to get better."

Laura Lundy

Inspire me

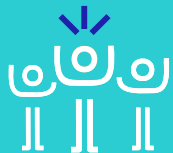
Practical examples of Youth Voice in schools to show the range of possibilities. These approaches can be applied in other organisations too.

Lighter touch ← → Deeper dive					
Consultation 	During PE lessons, teachers use active voting, e.g., run to red, yellow or green cones, to gather pupils' feedback on a specific aspect of the lesson.	Towards the end of the year, pupils complete an annual online survey, which collates the results, to give their views on PE, sport and physical activity.	As part of the 'You said, we did' process, every PE class starts the year with discussion groups. The PE team displays key actions and reports back on their progress.	Working with a SENCO, the PE teacher uses a series of focus group sessions to build a relationship with and gather views from targeted SEND pupils.	A PE panel, consisting of representative pupils from each year group, meets with PE staff each half-term to share views on curriculum planning and delivery.
Collaboration 	Prior to National School Sports Week, all pupils select two options from a menu of challenge activities. The PE team uses these to plan and run events.	At the first after-school multi-sport club of each term, participants test out potential activities then they and the staff agree that term's programme together.	At the start of a unit of work, pupils and staff trial and agree different learning options. Pupils decide which option/group to join for the duration of that unit.	Invited pupils with diverse experiences join parents, PE staff and senior leaders in a mini-conference to discuss and decide on the school's future PE kit.	PE staff and selected pupils bring issues for discussion and decision to the termly sports council meetings; sub-groups advise on specific 'hot' topics.
Co-production 	Teachers/coaches share draft promotional materials with pupils to gather ideas on how to make them more appealing to intended participants.	Pupil activators are invited to present their 'creating active schools' ideas to senior leaders and PE staff. School staff implement the winning ideas.	Young leaders, with support from PE staff, plan and lead a six-week lunchtime health and wellbeing programme for invited pupils.	A group of girls is recruited to support the PE staff to consult with less-active girls and to plan, design and run a series of campaigns to get them more active.	A team of elected pupils plans, organises and evaluates the annual intra-school competition schedule, overseen by two senior pupil 'captains'.


 Read the Youth Sport Trust **Case studies** for more detailed examples.

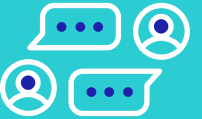
Self-Review

Use this brief self-review to help you to identify which of the eight areas to prioritise. YV = Youth Voice. P = priority.

Area	Key indicators	Working well	Could be better	P?
Roles 	- YV shapes all aspects and levels of our work relating to young people. - Different young people are involved in YV in different ways (methods, duration, depth).			
Recruitment 	- Young people who are under-served by our provision are actively targeted within YV. - YV includes young people from diverse backgrounds and with varied life experiences.			
Communication 	- Methods are inclusive and adapted to meet the needs of all/the targeted young people. - We ensure all young people have the time, space and confidence to contribute to YV.			
Collaboration 	- Young people feel safe, respected, fulfilled and connected to each other and to us. - YV is a partnership between young people and adults: both contribute their expertise.			

Self-Review

» Visit your **priority area(s)** for suggestions, examples, tips and links to additional tools.

Area	Key indicators	Working well	Could be better	P?
Empowerment 	- Young people have the authority, autonomy, confidence and capability to contribute. - Young people are enabled to grow and do more over time; we develop by taking risks.			
Compensation 	- Young people's time and commitment are valued (in different and appropriate ways). - Young people benefit from their experience of YV – and see/hear about its impact.			
Evaluation 	- YV is embedded within all relevant organisational reviews and evaluations. - We evaluate the effectiveness of our YV and use the findings to help us to evolve.			
Engaging others 	- All of our relevant staff and volunteers are supported to use YV effectively. - We advocate YV to our partners and share ideas and tools with each other.			

Collaboration

Creating a positive and cooperative environment



Why is this area important?

- Young people need to feel safe, respected, connected and cared for if they are to share their voices.
- We need to work in partnership with young people – we both bring expertise.



We want a culture where everyone is comfortable to share – even though we may not all agree.”

**Young Person,
Co-production Group**

A collaborative environment

A positive and collaborative environment is essential for Youth Voice. It needs to promote the following values for everyone involved.



To create a positive environment that facilitates Youth Voice, consider:

Who

- Which adults have or can build positive relationships with the young people?
- How will young people interact with each other?
- Who else can provide support?

Where

- Where will young people feel at ease?
- Is it fully accessible to everyone?
- How do you organise the space so it is welcoming and comfortable?

When

- When will you be able to give it the time it deserves?
- When will the young people be available and most receptive?
- What length of time is realistic?

How

- What will you do to make it enjoyable?
- Which activities will you use to connect everyone?
- Which methods will give all young people a voice?

Above all, consider how you will **collaborate with** rather than control young people (see **Empowerment**).

Examples

The coach plays 'snowball' during sessions: the participants write ideas on paper, scrunch it up and have a snowball 'battle' in teams. It is fun, teambuilding and ideas can be shared anonymously.

The project development group takes part in a series of 15-minute lunchtime sessions, using a range of creative methods (e.g., barriers wall, wishing tree, postcards) to identify issues and ideas.

The PE advisory panel members take part in an outdoor and adventurous activity day at the start of the year to build connections and explore ways of working as a team.

Depth of Youth Voice

Practical steps

Our co-production group suggests:

- Agree a code of conduct that will create a positive environment for everyone.
- Create opportunities for everyone to get to know each other as well as focus on tasks.
- Use a variety of activities to maximise fun and engagement for all.
- Facilitate with creativity and flexibility so young people can contribute in different ways.
- Make space for all young people to have a voice (see **Communication**).
- Trust young people to take responsibility, e.g. take the lead, do tasks between sessions.
- Make use of young people's input and report back to them on how it is being used.
- Be clear and honest about the extent of young people's involvement, e.g. if something is not negotiable, explain what and why.
- Keep parents/carers of under 18s (and under 25s if vulnerable) fully informed.



Young People's Top Tips

1. For targeted sessions, allow us to bring a friend.
2. Learn and use our names. Make time for us to relearn each other's names every time.
3. Plan activities – but allow time for listening and going 'off-piste'!



Tools

(these suggest facilitation methods and activities)



Youth Voice Toolkit: Activate Our Voice (Youth Sport Trust) [Youth Voice Resources – Youth Sport Trust](#) Practical activities for initiating Youth Voice.



Youth Voice Ideas, Tips and Tools – a toolkit for gathering Youth Voice (Street Games) [Youth Voice Toolkit \(v2 –print\) \(streetgames.org\)](#) Practical activities and methods for consulting with young people.



Inclusion 2020 Youth Voice Toolkit – a toolkit for inclusive focus groups (Youth Sport Trust) [Inclusion 2020 Youth Voice Toolkit – Youth Sport Trust](#) Tips, ideas and examples for involving young people with additional needs (SEND).



Engaging Young People – activity cards (Energise Me) [Engaging-Young-People-Activity-Cards.pdf \(energiseme.org\)](#) Practical activities for engaging young people in Youth Voice.



Participation Young Spice – a toolkit for meaningful participation (Young Wales) [E young spice cover \(ioe.ac.uk\)](#) See part 3 for a toolbox of methods.



Young Voices in Sport – Young Voices Toolkit Activity Cards (Sport Ireland) [Layout 1 \(sportireland.ie\)](#) Activity cards for involving young people in decision-making activities.



AIM The Right Way – supports accessible, inclusive and meaningful participation (SYP) [AIM The Right Way – The Right Way](#) Checklists to support planning for youth participation in decision-making.

Communication

Giving all young people a voice



Why is this area important?

- Every young person should be able to share their voice and be listened to – directly as far as possible.
- We need to adapt our communication methods to suit the young people.



I want to feel that I'm not being seen as difficult when stuff has to be done differently because I have a disability."

**Young Person,
Co-production Group**

Communication methods

How and when you communicate with young people will depend on your context, the young people's needs and the Youth Voice process. Communication methods may include:

- **Casual conversations** – e.g. walk and talk on the way to the pitch to discover what young people feel about PE.
- **Structured conversations** – e.g. use prepared questions to guide a focus group discussion about the PE kit.
- **Written information** – e.g. ask young people to keep a journal that reflects on their experiences of a targeted programme.
- **Visual information** – e.g. use emojis, photos or drawings as an alternative way to capture young people's experiences.
- **Audio-visual (AV) information** – e.g. use recording tools such as voicemessages or video clips to gather quick feedback on an activity or event.
- **Online** – e.g. 'meet' with groups of young people in virtual sessions or gather their ideas using remote apps/tools (subject to safeguarding and your school policies).
- **Access tools** – e.g. use specific tools to address the needs of specific young people, e.g. signboard, Makaton, Braille, interpreter, translated documents.

Use a mixture of methods to reach all young people. These can be used to transmit information as well as to gather their voices.

For '**deeper**' groups, where you are communicating over a longer period, older young people said...



WhatsApp is good for quick messages or polls.



Email is best for details.



Use emojis for rapid responses.

Zoom is best for virtual meetings.



Try creative online tools that are accessible to all



Don't forget the power of in-person events.

Examples

As part of its 'You said, we did' process, the PE team holds discussion groups in the first lesson of each year. Staff display themes in the PE corridor and report progress in assemblies each term.

Sports committee members who have learning difficulties meet additionally, supported by the SENCo, so they have time to explore and prepare their ideas ahead of the full committee meeting.

The PE advisory panel has five sub-groups – one for each development priority – which meet independently. Each half-term, the reps and PE lead meet to report progress and agree next steps.

Depth of Youth Voice

Practical steps

Our co-production group suggests:

- Listen to understand, not just to hear.
- Ask young people what works best for them, including those with specific needs.
- Agree how, when and how often you will communicate with the young people.
- Be aware of external factors that affect communication, e.g., school or home restrictions, digital exclusion.
- Use sub-groups, with specific tasks, to complement the work of larger groups.
- Allow young people to communicate through their own networks – subject to safeguarding.
- Facilitate and support so that all young people can contribute and be heard (see Collaboration).
- Support young people with specific needs to have a direct voice where possible, e.g., use other methods/languages, use additional aids/tools, give more time, provide information in advance.
- Give supporting staff or parents/carers guidance so they don't lead or judge young people's input.
- Report regularly on progress, setbacks and impact.



Young Peoples Top Tip's

1. Ask your allies and our peers to help to share communications outside of PE and sport slots.
2. Don't worry if you don't get 100% attendance every time – we have commitments too!
3. Let us know what is happening – even if progress has stalled!



Tools

(these help to make communication inclusive of young people with additional needs)



Inclusion 2020 Youth Voice Toolkit – a toolkit for inclusive focus groups [Inclusion 2020 Youth Voice Toolkit](#) – Youth Sport Trust
Tips, ideas and examples for involving young people with additional needs (SEND).



Activity Alliance – the leading voice for disabled people in sport. [Inclusive communications factsheets](#) A series of 10 inclusive communications factsheets.



British Dyslexia Association – supports young people with dyslexia and dyscalculia [Reasonable Adjustments – British Dyslexia Association](#) Guide for creating dyslexia-friendly materials.



National Deaf Children's Society – supports young people with hearing impairments [Resources for education professionals](#) Communication and learning guides for professionals as well as families.



Royal National Institute for the Blind – supports young people with visual impairments [Education professionals](#) Resources and information for education professionals.



National Autistic Society – supports young people who are autistic [Communication tools](#) Examples of tools and techniques to support autistic people with communication.



Mencap – supports people with learning disabilities [Communicating with people with a learning disability](#) Tips for communicating with young people with learning disabilities.

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Compensation

Valuing young people's input



Why is this area important?

- Young people's input is valuable and should be recognised, repaid and/or rewarded – in different and appropriate ways.
- Young people need to benefit from Youth Voice – and see/hear its impact.



Appreciation can make a day – even change a life. Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary."

Margaret Cousins

Types of compensation

Young people should never lose out financially when they contribute to Youth Voice but compensation may take different forms. For example:

- **Expenses:**
 - Essential: travel and subsistence costs are reimbursed.
 - Hidden: contributions to phone costs are given.
- **Training:** direct provision of training and qualifications.
- **Bursaries:** payment towards external training or qualifications.
- **Discounts:** reduced or waived fees for clubs, vouchers for kit.
- **Resources:** branded kit, stationery, water bottles, pin badges.
- **Privileges:** early lunch pass, choose music for session.
- **Opportunities:** new skills, experiences, networking, visits.

Perceived or actual costs are **barriers** to young people's involvement, especially to those who are from low-income families or who face additional costs, such as young people who are carers or who have additional needs. Older young people may be losing income by giving their time to you. Be upfront about compensation and any additional **support** you can offer.

We are making a difference!

Young people are **altruistic** – they want to make a difference. Compensation for their commitment comes from the **impact** – they want to know what has changed as a result of their input. Show you value Youth Voice by **reporting back** regularly to young people and sharing progress, setbacks and outcomes.

Examples

The names of pupils who take part in focus groups are put into a weekly prize draw. The prize was suggested by pupils: the winner chooses the music for changing time before and after that week's PE lessons.

Members of the sports crew, who help to co-design intra-school activities, are allowed to wear branded hoodies during lunchtimes and wear a special badge on their school uniforms during the day.

Young leaders who drive an inclusive PE and sport programme attend an annual disability sports festival where they learn new activities and work alongside professional coaches.

Depth of Youth Voice

Practical steps

Our co-production group suggests:

- Agree expenses upfront, avoid them as far as possible and repay them promptly.
- Review financial systems with young people to check they are not a barrier.
- Agree expectations with young people to make sure they are clear, realistic and fair.
- Promote the benefits of being involved, to the young people and to their areas of interest.
- Identify young people's motivations and aspirations when considering potential rewards.
- Consider sustainability of rewards, e.g., their environmental impact and whether they are cost-effective, replicable and/or lasting. Find out what the young people value.



Young People's Top Tips

1. A "thank you" is often enough!
2. Show us the difference our input is making/ has made.
3. Ask us what we would like to gain from our involvement.
4. Celebrate our successes with other people.



Tools

(these provide guidance, ideas and examples for compensating young people)



Youth Sport Trust Case Studies [Youth Voice Resources - Youth Sport Trust](#) Examples of benefits to pupils of being involved in Youth Voice.



Young Changemaker Awards (Youth Sport Trust) [Young Changemaker Awards - Youth Sport Trust](#) Nominate young people for annual awards and/or see examples to inspire other young people.



Maximising Benefits: A Framework for Volunteerism and Compensation for Young People (Civicus) [GVCYP_REPORT4.pdf \(civicus.org\)](#) Clarification and recommendations for compensating young volunteers/workers.



#iwill - youth volunteering and social action [Youth Social Action Resource Centre - iwill](#) Resources and examples for involving young people as volunteers and social change agents.



Sport and Recreation Alliance - volunteering in sport website [Recruit and Retain Volunteers | SRA | Sport and Recreation Alliance](#) Tips for recruiting, rewarding and retaining volunteers.



National Council for Voluntary Organisations - volunteering website [Paying volunteer expenses | NCVO](#) Guidance on volunteer expenses, e.g., what is lawful and taxable.

Empowerment

Enabling young people to grow



Why is this area important?

- Young people need to have the authority, autonomy and capability to contribute.
- We enable young people to develop over time – by taking calculated risks!



A bad situation is when adults lead a decision-making process but just want us to rubber-stamp what they have already decided."

**Young Person,
Co-production Group**

A commitment to youth empowerment

If Youth Voice is to be more than tokenistic, it needs to empower young people. Empowerment means giving young people:

- **authority** – we must allow them to act
- **autonomy** – we must trust them to do things independently
- **capability** – we must enable them to gain confidence, self-belief, knowledge and skills.

This means that Youth Voice should be **developmental**. We need to:

- support young people's continuing **growth**
- take appropriate risks – and learn from **trial and improvement**
- know when to **relinquish control** – allow for the unplanned.

Youth Voice enables young people to develop leadership skills that will sustain them in sport, education, work and life.



Download

Extract from the **Youth Sport Trust's Leadership Framework** to see the skills prioritised by our co-production group for the different stages of Youth Voice.

We need to facilitate leadership skills development. This includes enabling young people to have:

Recognition

they have a skills vocabulary and know what a skill looks and sounds like in action.

Acquisition

they learn and develop the skills through practice and experiential learning.

Application

they have opportunities to transfer and test their skills in different situations.

Progression

they increase their range of skills and apply multiple skills in more complex ways.

Examples

Pupils take part in taster sessions and gain experience of different activities and groups. This gives them knowledge before choosing what they would like to do and who with.

Before designing a sports festival for their peers, young people take part in outdoor problem-solving activities. This helps them to develop the problem-solving skills they will need to plan a complex event.

Young leaders are each allocated a mentor – an older leader who has experience of Youth Voice in school. The mentors support the young leaders whilst continuing to develop their own skills.

Depth of Youth Voice

Practical steps

Our co-production group suggests:

- Promote examples and show role models of young people's increasing empowerment.
- Make sure Youth Voice opportunities are appropriate for young people's stages of development.
- Provide relevant information (in appropriate formats) to build young people's knowledge.
- Use leadership training and opportunities to enable young people to develop the necessary skills.
- Provide or signpost young people to opportunities to continue their growth.
- Report back regularly to young people so they know what is happening (or not) as a result of their input.
- Make time and space to do things differently and respond to the unexpected.



Young People's Top Tips

1. Build our confidence and self-belief – help us to know that we can make a difference.
2. Learn to trust us and let go!
3. Expect the unexpected!
4. Use us to support the next cohort of young leaders.



Tools

(these provide examples of increasing empowerment of young people)



Young Changemaker Awards (Youth Sport Trust) [Young Changemaker Awards – Youth Sport Trust](#) Videos of previous award winners to show examples of and role models for Youth Voice.



Inclusion 2020 Youth Voice Toolkit – a toolkit for inclusive focus groups (Youth Sport Trust) [yst-inclusion-2020-youth-voice-toolkitfinal.pdf \(youthsporttrust.org\)](#) Practical examples and tips for scaffolding young people's involvement in focus groups.



Young Voices in Sport – a toolkit for Involving Young Members in Decision-making (Sport Ireland) [Young Voices in Sport](#) Booklet of tips plus activity cards for scaffolding young people's decision-making skills.



Youth Advocacy Toolkit – a toolkit to support young people as advocates (Unicef) [Youth-Advocacy-Toolkit.pdf \(unicef.org.uk\)](#) Booklet of tips and activities to support young people to run their own campaigns.



Unified Action – a framework for diversifying sport governance (Youth Sport Trust) [a-framework-for-diversifying-sport-governance.pdf \(youthsporttrust.org\)](#) Suggestions for enabling young people to take on sports governance roles.



Young Board Members – an online resource (Sport and Recreation Alliance) [Young Board Members | Sport and Recreation Alliance](#) Provides a model youth board and case studies of youth boards in practice.

Engaging others

Creating allies and supporters



Why is this area important?

- Youth Voice should support and/or be used by everyone in our organisation.
- We need to advocate Youth Voice to our partners and share approaches, resources and findings with each other.

“

Staff from the bottom to top need to listen. There's no point if Youth Voice isn't valued by decision-makers as well as deliverers.”

**Young Person,
Co-production Group**

Who needs to be involved?

Organisational structures will vary but, typically, Youth Voice needs to support and/or be supported by:

- **Decision-makers** – leaders, managers, trustees, governors.
- **Deliverers** – teachers, coaches, support staff, volunteers.
- **Partners** – other schools/clubs, external agencies, funders.
- **Families** – parents, carers, guardians, siblings, support staff.

Decision-makers

- Seek their endorsement of Youth Voice so it is valued and embedded across the organisation.
- Present – or support young people to present – Youth Voice findings to them.
- Request and share reports on what is changing/ has changed in response to Youth Voice.
- Advocate for Youth Voice to be within their decision-making structures and processes.

Deliverers

- Ask Youth Voice to be included in all aspects of their work that relates to young people.
- Provide guidance, training and tools to develop and keep improving their facilitation skills.
- Share – and enable them to swap – examples of effective Youth Voice in practice.
- Disseminate their Youth Voice findings and celebrate their successes.

Partners

- Share Youth Voice findings with partners to help to shape their provision and delivery.
- Provide opportunities for partners to work with and listen to your young people.
- Seek input, examples and ideas from partners who use Youth Voice in their work.

Families

- Inform and, where required, seek consent for Youth Voice work with u18s (u25 if vulnerable).
- Provide guidance if they will be supporting young people with additional needs.
- Share the benefits for and impact on their children of being involved in Youth Voice.

Examples

Drawing on previous sessions with an experienced coach, participants demonstrate fun, simple and active feedback activities to volunteers to help them to use Youth Voice in their future delivery.

Members of the project group prepare and present a case to school governors for an alternative PE kit. They also share this during a parents' evening to get everyone's backing.

The school hosts an annual sports fair where local partners are invited to promote their provision. It is a two-way process, with young people providing ideas and feedback to the partners.

Depth of Youth Voice

Practical steps

Our co-production group suggests:

- Advocate the importance and value of Youth Voice – to the organisation and young people.
- Match the benefits to people's priorities, for example:
 - **Decision-maker** – meets inspection/quality assurance requirements
 - **Deliverer** – increases levels of engagement
 - **Partner** – improves young people's transition
 - **Family** – gives children confidence and skills.
- Involve young people as advocates – they may have greater impact than you!
- Show that Youth Voice brings solutions, not just demands.
- Emphasise that Youth Voice is a tool to help you to improve.
- Celebrate impact and successes.



Young People's Top Tips

1. Start small to build confidence and trust in the process.
2. Use a drip-feed approach – keep throwing in pebbles instead of banking on one big splash!
3. Use us as your allies!



Tools

(these help to support and/or engage the support of others)

» **Youth Voice Video (Youth Sport Trust)** [Youth Voice Resources](#) – Youth Sport Trust Video co-produced with young people to highlight the value of Youth Voice.

» **Youth Voice Case Studies (Youth Sport Trust)** [Youth Voice Resources](#) – Youth Sport Trust Case studies to share examples of Youth Voice in action within the school sport network.

» **Youth Voice Training (Youth Sport Trust)** [Youth Voice Resources](#) – Youth Sport Trust Training to support the school sport network to implement Youth Voice.

» **The importance of giving children a voice (Play Their Way)** [Play Their Way – The Importance of Giving Children a Voice | The Lundy Model](#) Article, video and resources by Professor Laura Lundy.

Evaluation

Ensuring we are making a difference to and through Youth Voice

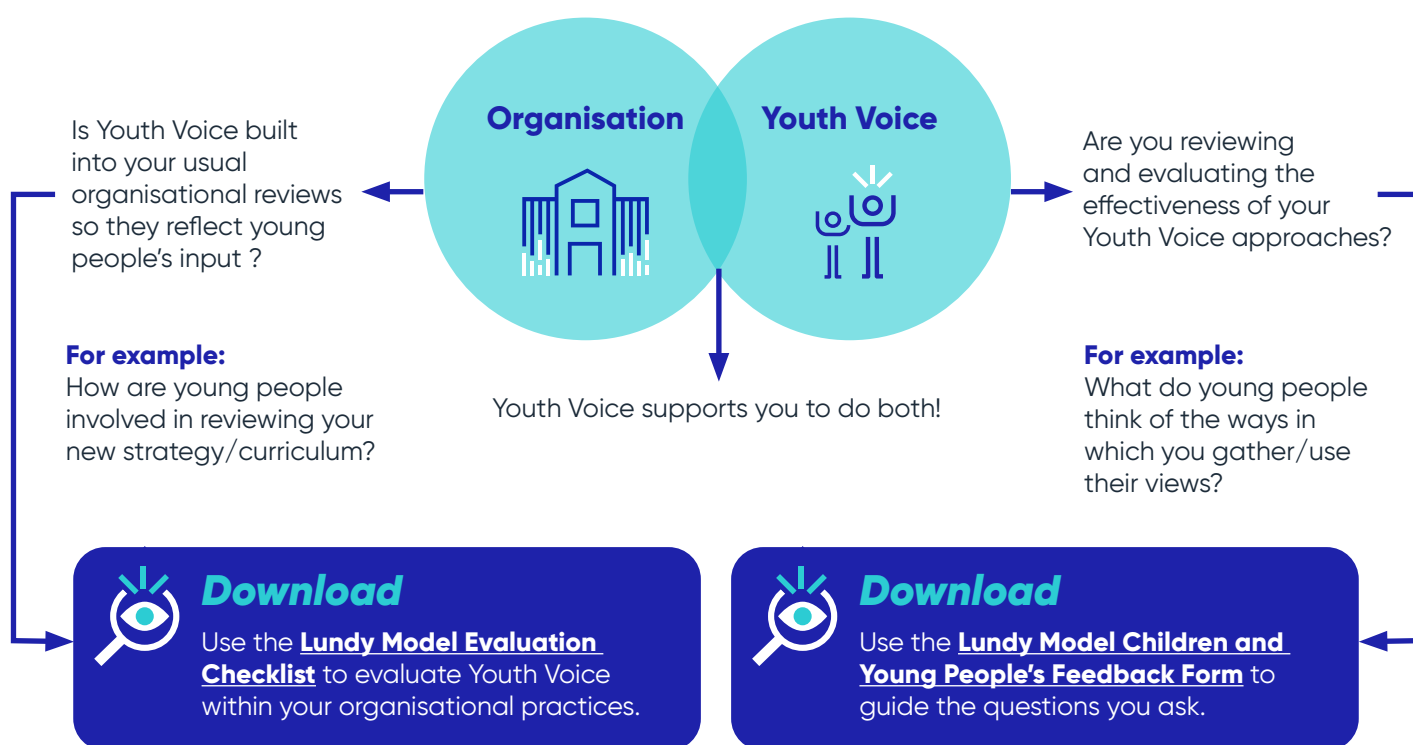


Why is this area important?

- The school/ organisation's usual evaluation processes should include Youth Voice.
- We need to evaluate the effectiveness of our Youth Voice approaches and use the findings to help us to evolve.

What do we evaluate?

The evaluation process should consider two elements:



Evaluation methods

The checklists support more formal evaluations of Youth Voice. You can also use any of the informal methods and practical tools shared in **Collaboration** and summarised in the **Depth Gauge**. For example:

- **Survey** – to gather all pupils' or participants' feedback.
- **Creative review tools** – (e.g., wishing tree) to gain feedback from different groups in different ways.
- **Focus groups** – to hear views from targeted young people.
- **Panel** – to involve young people in regular evaluations on an ongoing basis.

The insights you gather from young people throughout the year will feed into your summative evaluations.

Examples

The department puts a suggestion box outside the changing rooms alongside a question about Youth Voice (e.g. How can we listen to you better?). Pupils drop in their ideas on sticky notes.

As part of a school-wide approach, diverse young people are invited to focus groups run by different staff. Groups discuss what works well and what could be better about Youth Voice processes.

Members of the school sports council attend PE department meetings once a month and sit on occasional groups and panels, such as PE staff recruitment panels and the curriculum planning group.

Depth of Youth Voice

Practical steps

Our co-production group suggests:

- Build Youth Voice into the planning stage of organisational policies and practices so it is embedded from the start.
- Review and revise organisational policies and practices in the light of Youth Voice.
- Include additional, specific questions in all evaluations aimed at young people to find out:
 - to what extent young people felt they had a voice and that it was impactful
 - what worked well about Youth Voice
 - how Youth Voice could be improved.
- Use creative methods to gather feedback during or after Youth Voice work to see how well it is being/was received.
- See evaluation as just another element of Youth Voice – use all of the other area tips to help you to gather young people's feedback.



Young People's Top Tips

1. Let us know what you are doing/ have done as a result of Youth Voice.
2. Check whose voices you have gathered – do they represent the young people you need on board?
3. Seek the views of young people who chose not to share their voices – what stopped them?



Tools

(support the evaluation of Youth Voice. Use the **Collaboration** tools too)



What does a good Youth Voice experience look like? (Youth Sport Trust) [What does good look like](#) Description by young people on the co-production group of a positive YV experience.



Child-first coaching self-reflection sheet (Play Their Way) [95284-Self-Reflection-Voice.pdf](#) ([playtheirway.org](#)) Six simple questions to aid deliverers' reflection on child-first delivery.



Participation Framework Checklists and Evaluation Forms (Hub na nÓg) [Participation Framework Checklists and Evaluation Forms](#) | [Hub na nÓg](#) ([hubnanog.ie](#)) Lundy Model evaluation checklists and young people's feedback forms.



Collect – a toolkit for monitoring and evaluation (Street Games) [Collect – StreetGames](#) Tips, tools and resources for gathering data as part of monitoring and evaluation.



The Right Way – supports accessible, inclusive and meaningful youth participation (SYP) [AIM The Right Way – full checklist](#) ([squarespace.com](#)) Checklists to support planning and evaluation of youth participation in decision-making.

Recruitment

Reaching the 'right' young people



Why is this area important?

- Youth Voice must include young people from diverse backgrounds and with different experiences.
- We need to prioritise young people who are under-represented or less engaged in PE, sport and physical activity to redress inequalities.



It is essential that the young people are representative of our society."

**Young Person,
Co-production Group**

Recruitment strategies

Recruitment includes a wide range of approaches, depending on the type and depth of Youth Voice.

- **Expectation** – a whole cohort is asked or expected to respond, e.g., end-of-session post-its, year group survey, participant evaluation form.
- **Invitation** – a general invitation is issued and young people may respond if they wish, e.g., suggestion box, drop-in discussion, video/audio booth at an event.
- **Selection** – specific groups or individuals are invited to contribute, e.g., one-to-one conversation, focus group, peer-led interviews, topic-specific panel.
- **Application** – interested and eligible young people apply but only some may be selected, e.g., project development group, campaign team, youth board.
- **Election** – young people are nominated and voted for by their peers, e.g., sports council, ambassador.

It is not enough to have an 'open' process if we are to **redress inequalities**.

For all of these strategies, we need to **actively reach out** to and support young people who are **under-represented** and who bring different experiences and perspectives to Youth Voice. Ask yourself:

- **Content and presentation** – How can we present the opportunities so they reflect and resonate with these young people? Think about language, imagery and the medium.
- **Methods** – What additional or combination of strategies can we use to reach them? Think about prompting and following up.
- **Location** – Where can we promote the opportunities so they are seen by different young people? Think about non-sport spaces – real and virtual.
- **Supporters and role models** – Who else can help us to reach them? Think about other adults – and young people – in and out of school.
- **Response** – How can we support them to take a first step? Think about how and through whom they can gather more information and express an interest.

Examples

Evaluations are text-light and include visual prompts and easy-to-use response features (emojis, thumbs etc.). Young people are given extra time or a buddy to complete them or may give audio feedback.

Allies (peers, staff, family), who reflect or have a good relationship with under-represented groups, personally encourage targeted young people to volunteer for a project group.

Publicity about panel vacancies features diverse imagery and flags that young people from diverse backgrounds are sought. Adverts are posted in additional 'non-sport' places.

Depth of Youth Voice

Practical steps

Our co-production group suggests:

- Produce recruitment materials that explicitly invite and appeal to the targeted groups.
- Work through other partners and organisations to reach under-represented young people.
- Provide clear and succinct information about:
 - roles and responsibilities
 - levels of commitment
 - desired (lived) experience and skills
 - support and training provided
 - benefits and compensation (see Compensation).
- Enable young people to find out more before applying.
- Highlight relatable role models or similar examples.
- Offer a variety of application methods, e.g., written, audio, video, interview, group activity.
- For interviews/group activities, issue questions or guidance before the day.
- Use adapted or additional resources to involve young people with specific needs (see Communication).
- Give sufficient time between deadlines; provide reminders and encouragement.



Young People's Top Tips

1. Don't underestimate the power of personal encouragement – it builds our confidence and trust.
2. Don't worry about appearing tokenistic – but be open to learning and changing as you go.
3. Be aware of your unconscious bias and preconceptions!

Tools

(these provide insights, tips, examples and templates to support recruitment)



Inclusion 2020 Youth Voice Toolkit – a toolkit for inclusive focus groups (Youth Sport Trust)

[Inclusion 2020 Youth Voice Toolkit – Youth Sport Trust](#) Tips and examples for involving young people with additional needs (SEND).



Girls Active – GLAMS recruitment tool (Youth Sport Trust)

[GLAMS Recruitment Tool](#) Example of a presentation (with video links) for recruiting influencers/project developers.



Girls Activate Steering Group – advert to recruit a national panel (Youth Sport Trust)

[About the Girls Active Steering Group](#) Example of an advert for recruiting a young people (girls') panel.



National Young Ambassador Panel – advert to recruit a national panel (Sport Wales/YST)

[YA Panel Recruitment Poster](#) Example of an advert for recruiting a young people panel.



Making the Team Work – a toolkit for building a young people's sports panel (sportscotland)

[Toolkit – create your own panel – sportscotland](#) Section 2: recruitment and selection could apply to sports panels and other Youth Voice groups. The website offers examples and templates for adverts, applications and interviews.



Unified Action – a framework for diversifying sport governance (Youth Sport Trust)

[a-framework-for-diversifying-sport-governance.pdf \(youthsporttrust.org\)](#) Guidance on how to increase diversity on sports board.

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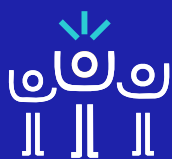


Developed by



Roles

Involving young people in different ways



Why is this area important?

- All decisions that affect young people's experience of PE, sport and physical activity should be informed by Youth Voice.
- Different young people can be involved in different ways and at varied levels.



Youth Voice gives a place for us to be exposed to the position of decision-makers."

**Young Person,
Co-production Group**

Structuring Youth Voice

There is no 'one way' to structure Youth Voice – the form should suit its purpose and the capacity of you and your young people. The variables include:

- **Numbers of young people** – e.g. all pupils/participants, targeted groups, invited/elected individuals.
- **Time required** – e.g. five-minute feedback, lunchtime meeting, day's conference, residential.
- **Frequency of involvement** – e.g. daily, weekly, monthly, termly, annually.
- **Duration of involvement** – e.g. one-off, length of programme, specific task, one-year commitment.
- **Autonomy of young people** – e.g. directed, supported, independent (see Empowerment).

Different types and levels of Youth Voice may run at the same time within your school/organisation. For example, this is the Youth Sport Trust's current Youth Voice structure.



Examples



Download

- See **Depth Gauge** for a list of Youth Voice activities
- Read **Inspire Me!** for a spectrum of consultation, collaboration and co-production examples.
- Read the **Youth Sport Trust case studies** for Youth Voice examples in practice.
- Use **Prompt Me!** to consider your Youth Voice structures.

Practical steps

Our co-production group suggests:

- Consider how Youth Voice can shape all aspects of your work that are relevant to young people's experience of your provision – from delivery through to governance.
- Offer young people different ways to share their voices – from consultees to trustees.
- Involve different numbers of young people for different purposes – but focus on those groups and individuals you need to reach to redress inequalities (see **Recruitment**).
- Be realistic and clear about the extent of young people's involvement – from light to deep.

Young People's Top Tips

1. See Youth Voice as a tool – not a burden!
2. Start simple – build confidence and trust before delving deeper.
3. Involve us from the start – not tagged on at the end.
4. Keep an open mind – we can do far more than you think!

Tools

(these illustrate and support different depths of Youth Voice)

» **Play Their Way – supports child-first coaching** [Play Their Way: What is co-creation and practical tips on how to deliver it](#) Blogs, tips and templates to support coaches/leaders to build Youth Voice into their delivery.

» **Your School Games – supports intra- and inter-school competitions** [Your School Games – Leadership and Volunteering](#) Guidance for and examples of pupils having a voice through sports crews and committees.

» **Girls Active – enables girls to have a voice and give a voice to other girls** [Girls Active – Youth Sport Trust](#) Resources and videos showing girls in advocacy, consultation and marketing (influencing) roles.

» **Making the Team Work – a toolkit for building a young people's sports panel (sportscotland)** [Toolkit – create your own panel – sportscotland the national agency for sport in Scotland](#) Ideas and guidance for setting up and running a young people's sports panel.



Unified Action – a framework for diversifying sport governance (Youth Sport Trust) [a-framework-for-diversifying-sport-governance.pdf \(youthsporttrust.org\)](#) Guidance and insights from young people on how to increase diversity on sports boards.