

Youth Participation in Events

You want to hear from young people and provide them with a platform in a way that makes a real difference. But how do you do it safely? How do you make sure that it benefits the young people who take part? Here we outline key considerations when inviting young people to present at public events.

Be clear about role and purpose

If you decide to invite young people to speak at an event, it's important that you are clear about what you want them to do, why you want them to be there and how you will support them before, during and after the event. If young people have led or co-created research or a resource then they may want to play a role in presenting the findings to a wider audience. You will need to communicate with the young people what the theme of the event will be, who else is presenting, who will be in the audience and if the presentation is going to be recorded.

Proper preparation

You might be inviting young people with lived experiences of services. It is important to talk to young people about how they would like to be introduced. When having this discussion it's important to help them think forward into the future - how they might want to be described today may not be how they want to be remembered in the future. The Chair of the event should agree with young people how to prepare the audience and place boundaries around questions and block any inappropriate questions.

After care

After the event it's important there is allocated person who will debrief with the young people.

What's in it for them?

Exposure and experience are great but they don't pay the bills or appropriately recognise the contribution young people have made. It's important young people are compensated for their time and that any expenses are covered. If the young people have less experience in presenting you can offer free training and support in presenting and maybe a certificate and/or recommendation letter.

Right to change their mind

It's important that young people know that they can change their mind at any time and they don't have to give a reason. Make sure you have a plan B so they can people can opt out if they need to. Somebody the young person trusts should be there to support the young people throughout the presentation and during breaks.