

# My Norfolk, My Voice Executive Summary



Developed and run by the multi-agency Children and Young People Strategic Alliance Stakeholder Engagement and Insight subgroup in collaboration with young people, My Norfolk, My Voice (MNMV) looks at how we build an interactive and productive relationship with the children and young people of Norfolk.

Open to everyone aged 5-25 in Norfolk and delivered with the assistance of trusted adults in their lives, the survey secured over **1600 responses** and helped us answer the following key questions:



- 1.** What are the most effective methods/ platforms through which to engage with children and young people?
- 2.** What are the most effective times and places for engagement?
- 3.** What do children and young people want to be engaged about?

# What children and young people told us

Norfolk's children and young people who took part in the survey, and some of the trusted adults who work with them, have told us what they want (and don't want) from engagement and participation.

## All children and young people

- Help us to understand the subject you want to talk to us about
- Tell us the 'who, what, why and how'
- Reach us through the trusted adults in our lives so we can be supported to take part and know we can trust you
- Talk to us where we are – through school, college and groups we go to
- Don't ask us to answer long, difficult or complicated questions
- We like online surveys, but appreciate support to understand and complete them
- Tell us what difference our voices are making- keep the conversation going
- Co-produce your exercise with us, especially with those with lived experience in the topic you're covering
- A topic being scary or worrying can put us off, so take time to explain, demystify and support us if you need to talk to us about it
- Respect us if we don't want to get involved or give our views
- Avoid online meetings – we're 'Zoomed out'!



## Young people with disabilities

- Make things 'easier to read' by default – it's easier for everyone, not just us
- Give us the help and support we need to take part
- Don't underestimate us – we've got some amazing experience and there's a lot we can do!

## Younger children

- Make it fun and engaging for us
- We're interested in what we know about, so take extra time to explain bigger topics and make them interesting if you want to talk to us about them

## Professionals/trusted adults

- We can help tell children and young people (CYP) about opportunities and support them to take part
- Involve us early, ask us what we need to support CYP to take part
- Provide resources that can help us engage with CYP on your behalf
- Think about how what you're doing can help us achieve our aims and objectives
- Give us time to work with our CYP on your engagement

## Older young people

- Talk to us about things that are important to us
- Social media is our preferred communication tool, but take time to build a trusted and interesting profile before asking us things
- Use different platforms depending on who you are trying to reach
- Involve us in producing online content
- Not all of us are online or use social media – don't exclude us

# Recommendations

**These recommendations  
can be found in full in  
the main report**



## Understanding demographics

- Consider the age groups you want to engage with and target these
- Where possible, use a single set of accessible questions.
- All engagement should cater for those with physical and learning/communication challenges.

## Getting children and young people interested

- Information, education and support around a topic should be provided before or with an engagement
- It is vital that children and young people understand who they are engaging with, what the engagement is about, why their engagement is important and how to complete/take part in the engagement
- Timely updates on the journey of children and young people's voice into action will be appreciated and help develop repeat engagement.
- The development of relationships with trusted adults already involved in children and young people's lives is a positive way to increase understanding and interest.
- Younger children may benefit from specific separate engagement work.
- Additional support may be needed to help children and young people with disabilities to engage with your exercise.
- Long, difficult or complicated questions can be really off-putting to children and young people.

## Talking to children and young people about what they're interested in

- Involve children and young people with lived experience in the areas you are interested in.
- Where a subject may be worrying or scary to children or young people, careful consideration needs to be given to how this is approached.
- Talking to younger children about wider topics outside their own direct life experience and interests will require additional work to inform and engage them on the subject(s).

## How children and young people would like to get involved

- Online surveys are the most popular engagement option with young people, but do need extra effort to produce good results.
- Consider engaging with children and young people through schools and other educational settings.
- Online meetings are not a popular option and should be avoided as a main avenue for engagement, for the time being at least.
- Respect that not all children and young people want to engage and give their views or may disengage part way through an exercise, for a range of reasons.
- Newsletters are an unpopular option with children and young people, but more popular with professionals and potentially parents.
- The concept of a young persons' reference group or panel should be explored further.

## Using Social Media

- Social media is a really important part of many young people's lives. Where social media is to be used as an engagement platform, consider:
  - building a trusting online 'relationship' with your audience first
  - making content fun and engaging
  - directly involving young people in co-production and promotion
  - using different platforms to reach different groups of young people
  - the resources available/needed
  - Enabling young people who don't or can't access social media to engage





# What we learned from developing and delivering **My Norfolk, My Voice**



## First steps

- Develop and agree a small number of key overarching principles that set out what you want your engagement to achieve, and refer to these throughout the project.
- For collaborative exercises, agreed key principles also help keep all partners' interests at the heart of the work.
- Establish whether the answers to your principle questions exist already in part or full.

## Designing the survey

- The engagement should be developed from the start to be as flexible, simple to follow and convenient as possible.
- If developing questions, the key consideration should be the accessibility of the language used.
- Keep to the minimum number of 'asks' of participants as possible to get the information you need – including demographics.
- Refer back to your principles to keep on track.
- Wherever possible, use platforms that enable the use of assistive technology and methods.
- Wherever possible, test your developing model/approach with representatives from your target audience.

## Developing the survey

- The development of the style, format and methodology of an engagement should be guided wherever possible by members of the engagement's target audience
- As well as being easy to engage with, the exercise must be understood by those taking part. Take time to answer who is seeking engagement, why, why it matters and what difference it will make.
- Learn from others wherever possible. Speak to experts or the audience you want to interact with.

## Delivering the survey

- Within reason, make the window of completion/engagement with your exercise as long as possible and provide as much notice as possible.
- Involve communications colleagues at an early stage and create a 'comms plan' for your engagement.
- Provide an email address for queries
- Provide regular reminders and updates via your chosen platforms.