

PRINCIPLE 2:

ENSURE WORK IS INFORMED BY AND CREATED WITH YOUNG PEOPLE



This principle ensures young people's voices are considered at all levels of decision making and in all projects, allowing the organisation to have a youth-led approach. By ensuring work is guided by young people's needs and priorities, we not only improve the quality, but also ensure it is more impactful for the young people we serve.

THIS RESOURCE
WAS CO-PRODUCED
ALONGSIDE OUR
YOUNG ADVISOR,
GRACIE

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

1

Informed by young people

- We prioritise review periods to listen to feedback from young people with the aim of shaping our programmatic work E.G through surveys or consultations with young people.
- For our wider work, this also means staying updated with youth trends and listening to young people's needs and priorities.
- Example: Annual Youth Voice Insights Report: Youth Voice in Politics 2024.

While this would be considered a more 'light-touch' youth voice activity, it plays a vital role in laying the foundations of our work. Allowing us to gather feedback from a broader range of young people, helping to inform future decisions about our programmes and projects.

2

Created with young people

- Young people are central to designing and creating our work. In practice, this means carving out spaces to facilitate this more in-depth method of youth participation, allowing them to go beyond providing feedback and, instead, take an active role in co-designing and problem solving.
- The type of youth participation opportunity will look different depending on the project at hand.



Examples from our work at The Diana Award include:

- Co-producers on our Young Changemakers Programme, who played a key role in shaping the project through co-designing content and sitting on the project steering group. You can read the team's 'Guide to Co-Production' [here](#).
- Our Anti-Bullying Youth Board collaborated with staff to create resources and webinars for parents/carers on the topic of anti-bullying.
- Young Advisors created our Policy Upskilling resource, alongside our Policy team.
- Youth led workshops at organisational away days, where staff and young people collaborated on key decisions and an action plan for the coming months.

TOP TIPS FOR OTHER ORGANISATIONS

DESIGN

- Start from a position of 'what can young people influence in this process' and 'what do we need to know and how can young people help us with this?'
- Audit decision making processes and spaces to identify areas youth voice would be beneficial and provide the most meaningful influence.
- When planning projects or ongoing reviews, build in enough time to account for meaningful youth participation.



DELIVERY

- Be flexible! Doing this work means potentially working in ways your organisation has not yet tried. This may mean having meetings after usual working hours, to account for young people's participation.
- Consider different workshop formats and creative participation methods to ensure young people can participate in a way which works best for them.
- Have clear expectations with young people on what decisions they can influence and change: don't overpromise and be open about resource, capacity and fixed parameters that some decisions must be made in.
- Consider hosting an in-person opportunity for young people and staff to participate in team-building activities together. This will help break down a sense of hierarchy within the space.
- For staff and young people project collaborations, put in regular meetings and forward plan tasks, to ensure young people can fit this in around their schedule and avoid young people feeling overwhelmed.

REVIEW

- Gather feedback from staff and young people, to foster a whole organisational approach to improving youth voice practices.
- Celebrate the impact young people's contributions have had on a piece of work, to show young people you value their time, but also to help build towards a culture of youth participation within your organisation.



PRINCIPLE IN ACTION:

HOW DID WE WORK WITH YOUNG ADVISORS TO IMPROVE THIS WITHIN THE DIANA AWARD?

CASE STUDY: SOCIAL MEDIA PROJECT

Young Advisors identified a need for youth voice to be more amplified within our social media content, so collaborated with our marketing and communications team to set up a social media working group. The purpose of this group was twofold; to trial new methods of boosting youth voice within our social media content but also trial this new function with Young Advisors working alongside staff on a regular basis. Among the new methods of involving youth voice trialled were:

1

World Mental Health Day Video Campaign

- Young Advisors created a video concept, script and outreach strategy to involve young people from across our programmes in a [video](#) for World Mental Health Day. They gained feedback and collaborated with our marketing and communications team to create the video, ready for launch.

2

Social media forum

- Young Advisors hosted an online and in-person social media forum for young people across our programmes, with the aim of gathering feedback and supporting with strategising future content.
- Our Young Advisor Elsa delivered a session on using social media as a force for change and attendees were supported in storyboarding their own social action campaign.

HOW HAS THIS COLLABORATION HELPED

STAFF AND YOUNG PEOPLE?

Marketing & Communications Co-ordinator

"The Young Advisors have helped massively on creating a more youth-focused approach to our communications and are always ready to share their ideas on how we can better appeal to young people."



Hear from our Young Advisor, Gracie

"I think that the social media project epitomises the importance of young people and staff working in solidarity and I hope that these projects become a consistent aspect of the charity curriculum in the future."

CASE STUDY: YOUNG ADVISORS POLICY PROJECT

Young Advisors identified a need for more support and upskilling for young people when engaging in policy activities at The Diana Award. To action this, we established a partnership between our Policy Team and a subgroup of Young Advisors. This partnership focused on:

1

Co-producing a Policy Upskilling Resource

Young Advisors led consultations with young people to understand key themes and barriers to participating in policy initiatives. This then informed the content of the resource alongside input from our Policy Team. The resource aims to demystify the policy process and boost young people's confidence in contributing to policy work.

2

Young Advisor Policy Working Group

Young Advisors collaborated with our Policy team to conduct focus groups with young people to gain insight into what young people wanted The Diana Award to advocate for. Young Advisors led the workshops, researched the emerging topics and each created a detailed write-up covering the recommendation they believed The Diana Award could follow.

HOW HAS THIS COLLABORATION HELPED STAFF AND YOUNG PEOPLE?



Hear from our Young Advisor, Aaliyah:

"Being part of the Policy Group gave me the opportunity to engage in real, thoughtful conversations around topics that matter. Collaborating with staff helped me grow in communication, critical thinking and active listening. It made me feel genuinely embedded in the work, and gave me confidence that youth voice isn't just heard – it's taken seriously."

Policy Manager:

"The Young Advisors contributed knowledge and perspectives that I couldn't have provided myself and our final deliverables are much stronger with their input. It was very rewarding being able to provide them with opportunities to influence the organisation's policy work while gaining skills and hands-on experience."



[Policy Upskilling resource >](#)

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The Diana Award's Office, 33 Queen Street, London, EC4R 1AP.

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