

August 2017

Science and the youth sector

How to communicate with youth workers



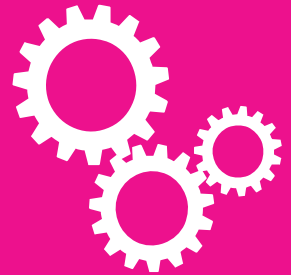
This toolkit sets out best practice principles for engaging youth workers. It focuses on 3 core areas of engagement:

COMMUNICATIONS



RESOURCES

TRAINING



Key elements underpin these principles

(always keep these in mind when attempting to engage)

Getting young people through the door and keeping them engaged is central to their role

They are committed to improving the lives of young people

To engage them you must help them meet their objectives, which fall into one or more of the following categories – 'Engagement and Entertainment', 'Building Life Skills', 'Employability and Future Steps'

They are informal learners as well as champions of informal learning

Youth workers are time and resource poor

Many heavily involve young people in shaping their work and making decisions on content



COMMUNICATING WITH YOUTH WORKERS

BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES:

CONTENT

Imagery boosts engagement and should reflect audience

Easy-to-digest, 'bite-size information', means less relevant parts can be easily ignored

Content that features contribution and **input from young people** / local community is appreciated

Localised (to region)



BITE-SIZE INFORMATION

Relevant to youth workers' objectives
With evidence

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUTH WORKERS

BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES:

LANGUAGE

Should be **informal**:
grounded in real-life, easy to understand and conversational

- Avoid acronyms, jargon
- Avoid academic phrasing

Use of **young people's terminology** is appreciated as are direct quotes where appropriate

Simple
and straight to the point

Humour
goes a long way



Avoid 'STEM'
as it is not well known and feels too academic
Refer to subjects individually as appropriate

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUTH WORKERS

BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES:

CHANNEL



FACE-TO-FACE



often considered the ideal
(Youth Workers are **people-people**)

Press coverage can be useful

WORD OF MOUTH



EMAIL

- ✓ Popular option
- ✓ Openness to regular newsletter
- ✓ They often read round robins from regional leads, managers, youth networks – a good place to access relevant news and information

SOCIAL MEDIA

- ✓ Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter

Something they are using lots already and is easy for them to share with others



Useful channel and highly trusted:

- Multi-agency networks – social workers, career coaches, Scout leaders
- Manager, colleagues, friends
- Team meetings and Meetups are an important space for sharing

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUTH WORKERS

BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES:

TIMING

Avoid school holidays – as these are particularly busy times for youth workers



Send reminders
(as emails can be easily missed)

CREATING RESOURCES FOR YOUTH WORKERS

BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES:

STYLE

Clear objectives and outcomes

Simple to use and adapt to needs

Do not require the lots of additional materials

Young person friendly – elements that can be directly shared with young people e.g. videos

Involving young people in early stages of design

Tailored by age of young person - younger need more structure, older more flexibility



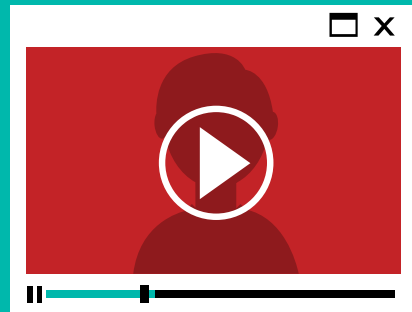
CREATING RESOURCES FOR YOUTH WORKERS

BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES:

FORMAT

Ideally an **online portal like TES** (teaching resources) where free tools and resources are shared

- Resources reviewed and improved by youth workers
- Amazon style 'other resources you might like'
- Central website preferable to personal accounts as removes need for login details and boosts accessibility



Videos work well for both youth worker and young person

- **YouTube** is an already well-used channel

Resources should be primarily online but be printable

- Supporting offline resources should be orderable if needed



RUNNING TRAINING FOR YOUTH WORKERS

BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES:

CONTENT

- ✓ **Informal learning style** – based on real life examples, practical application
- ✓ **Show outcomes for young people**
- ✓ **Accreditation / certification** for youth workers
- ✓ **Allow for networking** with other youth professionals and youth workers
- ✓ **Participative** and deliberative
- ✓ **Evidence of buy-in from young people**
- ✓ **Take away resources** and tools to use straight away
- ✓ **Ongoing support** post-training – follow up and practical help
- ✓ **Ongoing share site** – discuss experiences, observations, examples of use



RUNNING TRAINING FOR YOUTH WORKERS

BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES:

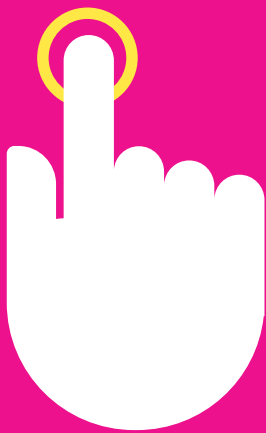
LOGISTICS

½ day is most realistic length



Should be free/
very low cost

- Deliver **on-site** where possible
- **Partner** with other organizations, piggy-back onto existing training schemes to maximise engagement (e.g. regional training)



Make signing up
quick and easy

e.g. 'one click' using
site such as Eventbrite



KEEP IT LOCAL
(to region)

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