

Case Study

Involving Young People: one County Sports Partnership's approach

Children and young people can make great contributions to your organisation's work. The challenge is to find ways to involve them meaningfully and ensure their voices are heard and respected.

With this in mind, Energize Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin County Sports Partnership have set up a School Games Youth Forum. The Forum allows young people to help plan and shape the Shropshire Homes School Sport Festivals, as part of the Sainsbury's School Games.

The Youth Forum, comprising around 20 young people aged 14-18, meets monthly to discuss their responsibilities. These include:

- planning the opening and closing ceremonies
- designing event merchandise, including competitor t-shirts and wristbands
- providing evaluation on the event
- and launching marketing and PR campaigns.

The Forum gives young people a voice. It also gives them the chance to develop skills and be involved in planning and organising a large scale sporting event. The group is now managed by the two senior youth forum members, with CSP support.

Members need to be:

- between 14 and 18 years old
- in full or part time education
- interested in volunteering.

Around half of the members of the group are retained each academic year, and as the Forum meets regularly this provides an ideal platform to maintain discussions with some of the same young people. This has proved invaluable to the CSP when developing their safeguarding work.

The CSP has been able to use the Forum to consult effectively on a number of relevant safeguarding issues, for example: safeguarding procedures at the festival; reviewing the young people's section of the CSP website; and developing a group of cyber mentors in conjunction with the LSCB.

There are some challenges for the CSP:

- managing the recruitment process (undertaken in conjunction with the relevant participating schools)
- facilitation/support to the group including time/financial costs
- establishing relevant work areas that young people can make an impact on
- managing young people's expectations.

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