



SVSYF - Research, Consultation and Engagement with Children and Young People Ethical Code of Practice

This Code of Practice is designed to support all those engaged in consultation, research or engagement with young people.

The Code is also intended to reassure young people, parents/guardians and their support staff that research is carried out in a professional and ethical manner.

- Researchers will behave ethically and will not do anything which might damage the reputation of SVSYF.
- Respondents' cooperation is voluntary and it must be based on accurate / factual and not incorrect information about the general purpose and nature of the project.
- Researchers will never allow personal data they collect in a research project to be used for any purpose other than that initially agreed unless the purpose changes (in this instance researchers will go back and seek additional consent).
- Researchers will ensure that projects and activities are designed, carried out, reported and documented accurately, transparently, objectively and to appropriate quality.
- Researchers will ensure that the correct consent has been obtained. (individual organisations should take responsibility for obtaining consent for young people to be involved in group work, the onus for consent to take part in individual consultations would lie with the researcher – parental consent needs to be obtained from all young people under the age of 18 years)
- SVSYF have signed up to the Sunderland Compact. The Involvement and Consultation code of practice commits to a minimum period of 12 weeks for VCS to respond to formal consultation. We would advocate this as an example of good practice.

Working with Young People

SVSYF recognize the important role young people have in decision making. When consulting with young people SVSYF are committed to feeding back to young people on findings and also later of the impact of their contribution.

We would expect that during consultations researchers;

- Treat young people with respect and recognise them as individuals
- Explain that young people have the right to withdraw consent at any point
- Regard them positively and value them as individuals who have specific needs and rights and a particular contribution to make.
- Work with them in spirit of co-operation and partnership based on mutual trust and respect.
- Value their views and take them seriously.
- Work with them in ways that enhance their inherent capacities and capabilities, and develop their potential.
- Strive to understand them within the context in which they live.

- There should be clarity from the start of consultation about what areas of research, consultation or engagement are open to change and those which are not. (this is really important although we know it can be difficult to predict this at the beginning)
- Researchers must acknowledge there are limits to confidentiality and explain this to young people at the start of the process. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if a young person is in danger of being harmed. (please refer to Safeguarding procedures)

In order to do this;

- We will visit young people at a suitable date and time.
- We will start with a quick icebreaker so we can learn young people's names
- We will use creative methods of engagement and consultation.
- We may record some of the conversations (only with consent) and we may take a photo (only with consent).
- We will establish a group agreement and include confidentiality within the group.
- We won't use real names when we write the report.
- We will treat all discussions with respect, there are no right or wrong answers to the questions
- When we have finished asking everyone questions we will send the results to participants organisations and disseminate the report via the Corporate Consultation Group Database.
- We will say thank you to young people and support staff.
- We will ask young people if they would like a certificate for taking part.
- We will ensure all young people know their views are extremely important and valued
- We will provide contact details for anyone wants to contact us to discuss the consultation
- We can offer guidance if any media coverage comes out of SVSYF's work with young people. For individual projects, guidance should be sort from the appropriate source i.e. PR department.

Code of Practice developed by Amanda Gerry – Sunderland Voluntary Sector Youth Forum - October 2010

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Good Practice in Research, Consultation and Research with young people

